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L E T T E R S
T O
D R. H O R S L E Y,
I N A N S W E R T O H I S
A N I M A D V E R S I O N S
O N T H E
History of the Corruptions of Christianity,

[P R I C E T W O S H I L L I N G S A N D S I X - P E N C E .]

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D R. H O R S L E Y,
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A N I M A D V E R S I O N S
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W I T H
A D D I T I O N A L E V I D E N C E
T H A T T H E
P R I M I T I V E C H R I S T I A N C H U R C H W A S U N I T A R I A N.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L.L.D. F.R.S.

LET NOT HIM THAT GIRDETH ON HIS HARNESS BOAST
HIMSELF AS HE THAT PUTTETH IT OFF.

I KINGS, XX. 11.

B I R M I N G H A M,
P R I N T E D B Y P E A R S O N A N D R O L L A S O N, F O R
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T H E
P R E F A C E.

MY design in writing the *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, it will easily be perceived, was to compose a work proper for the use of all christians, learned and unlearned, and indeed chiefly the latter. Also, having an extensive object before me, I did not give much more attention to one part of the scheme than to another. On these accounts I avoided all unnecessary quotations from original writers in the languages in which they wrote, especially in Greek, which I had great difficulty in getting printed; but I gave some passages that were of particular value, and in Latin, and distinctly referred to as many others as I had actually made use of myself; making a point of referring to none, at first or second hand, of which I saw any reason to doubt.

It has happened that hitherto the first article in my work, viz. *The History of*
a opinions

opinions concerning Christ, has attracted the more particular notice of critics, which has led me to study this subject more than I should otherwise have done; and I think it will probably engage my attention some time longer. Indeed, as the question is of particular importance, I think it right to take every method in my power to invite and promote the fullest discussion of it. With this view, I replied to some remarks of a writer in the Monthly Review, which, though not in the least affecting my principal argument, gave me an opportunity to add some new illustrations.

Dr. Horsley's *Charge to his clergy* has afforded me another opportunity of re-examining the subject; and the result, which is now before the reader, has been, as I think, a farther illustration and a stronger confirmation of my original position, viz. that the belief that Christ was a mere man, naturally possessed of no other powers than other men have, but a distinguished messenger of God, and the chief instrument
in

in his hands for the good of men, was the original faith of the christian church, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles.

This controversy, I hope, will continue, either with Dr. Horsley, or some other person. Nothing, however, shall be wanting on my part to keep it up, so long as any new light shall appear to be thrown upon the question in debate; and after this I intend to compose an entire work on this subject only; stating, in as clear a light as I shall be able, the evidence of the above important truth (for such I cannot help considering it) as it shall then appear to me, with all the proper authorities in the original languages, and leave it to make whatever impression it may on the minds of others, having then done my duty with respect to it.

In the mean time, I am by no means sanguine in my expectations from the effect of the most forcible arguments, on the minds of those who are at present

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indisposed

indisposed to receive the opinion that I contend for, in consequence of strong early prejudices in favour of a different one; prejudices which have been confirmed by much reading, thinking, and conversation, especially if those who are influenced by them be advanced in life. It is happy for the cause of truth, as well as other valuable purposes, that man is mortal; and that while the species continues, the individuals go off the stage. For otherwise the whole species would soon arrive at its *maximum* in all improvements, as individuals now do.

If any person ought to have candour for others in this respect, *I* ought; having had abundant experience of the difficulty with which deep-rooted prejudices give way to the strongest evidence, even when the mind is naturally active, and the attention is constantly kept in a state of inquiry. On this account, a short history of the progress of my own thoughts with respect to this subject may be useful.

To

THE PREFACE.

To myself the reflection upon it is highly so, at the same time that it is not a little humbling.

Having been educated in the strictest principles of Calvinism, and having from my early years had a serious turn of mind, promoted no doubt by a weak and sickly constitution, I was very sincere and zealous in my belief of the doctrine of the trinity; and this continued till I was about nineteen; and then I was as much shocked on hearing of any who denied the divinity of Christ (thinking it to be nothing less than impiety and blasphemy) as any of my opponents can be now. I therefore truly feel for them, and most sincerely excuse them.

About the age of twenty, being then in a regular course of theological studies, I saw reason to change my opinion, and became an Arian; and notwithstanding what appeared to me a fair and impartial study of the scriptures, and though I had no bias on my mind arising from subscribed creeds, and confessions of faith, &c. I continued in

that persuasion fifteen or sixteen years ; and yet in that time I was well acquainted with Dr. Lardner, Dr. Fleming, and several other zealous Socinians, especially my friend Mr. Graham. The first theological tract of mine (which was on the doctrine of atonement) was published at the particular request, and under the direction of Dr. Lardner ; and he approving of the scheme which I had then formed, of giving a short view (which was all that I had then thought of) of the progress of the corruptions of christianity, he gave me a few hints with respect to it. But still I continued till after his death indisposed to the Socinian hypothesis. After this, continuing my study of the scriptures, with the help of his *Letters on the Logos*, I at length changed my opinion, and became what is called a Socinian ; and in this I see continually more reason to acquiesce, though it was a long time before the arguments in favour of it did more than barely preponderate in my mind. For the arguments which had the principal weight with me at that time, and particularly those texts
of

of scripture which so long retarded my change of opinion, I refer my readers to the *Theological Repository*, vol. iii. p. 345.

I was greatly confirmed in this doctrine after I was fully satisfied that man is of an uniform composition, and wholly mortal; and that the doctrine of a separate immaterial soul, capable of sensation and action when the body is in the grave, is a notion borrowed from heathen philosophy, and unknown to the scriptures. Of this I had for a long time a mere *suspicion*; but having casually mentioned it as such, and a violent outcry being raised against me on that account, I was induced to give the greatest attention to the question, to examine it in every light, and to invite the fullest discussion of it. This terminated in as full a conviction with respect to this subject as I have with respect to any other whatever. The reasons on which that conviction is founded may be seen in my *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*, of which I have lately published a new and improved edition.

Being now fully persuaded that Christ was a man like ourselves, and consequently that his pre-existence, as well as that of other men, was a notion that had no foundation in reason or in the scriptures; and having been gradually led (in consequence of wishing to trace the principal corruptions of christianity) to give particular attention to ecclesiastical history, I could not help thinking but that (since the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ was not the doctrine of the scriptures, and therefore could not have been taught by the apostles) there must be some traces of the rise and progress of the doctrine of the trinity, and some historical evidence that *unitarianism* was the general faith of christians in the apostolical age, independent of the evidence which arose from its being the doctrine of the scriptures.

In this state of mind, the reader will easily perceive that I naturally expected to find, what I was previously well persuaded *was to be found*; and in time I collected much more evidence than I at first expected,

pected, considering the early rise, and the long and universal spread of what I deem to be a radical corruption of the genuine christian doctrine. This evidence I have fairly laid before the reader. He must judge of the weight of it, and also make whatever allowance he may think necessary for my particular situation and prejudices.

I am well aware that it is naturally impossible that the evidence I have produced should impress the minds of those who are Arians or Athanasians, as it will those of Socinians; nor are men to be convinced of the proper humanity of Christ, by arguments of this kind. They must begin, as I did, with the study of the scriptures, and whatever be the result of that study, it will be impossible for them, let them discipline their minds as they will, not to be influenced in the historical inquiry, as I was, by their previous persuasion concerning the subject of it. If, however, they should be so far impressed with the historical arguments, as to think it probable that the christian church was, in a very
early

early period, unitarian ; it will, no doubt, lead them to expect, that they shall find the doctrine of the scriptures, truly interpreted, to be so too.

With respect to myself, I do not know that I can do any thing more. Being persuaded, as I am, from the study of the scriptures, that Christ is properly a man, I cannot cease to think so ; nor can I possibly help the influence of that persuasion in my historical researches. Let other persons write as freely on their respective hypotheses as I have done on mine ; and then indifferent persons, and especially younger persons, whose minds have not acquired the stiffness of ours, who are turned fifty, may derive benefit from it.

Firm as my persuasion now is concerning the proper humanity of Christ (a persuasion that has been the slow growth of years, and the result of much anxious and patient thinking) I do not know that, in the course of my enquiry, I have been under the influence of *prejudice* more than
all

all other men naturally are. As to *reputation*, a man may distinguish himself just as much by the defence of old systems, as by the erection of new ones; but I have neither formed any new systems, nor have I particularly distinguished myself in the defence of old ones. When I first became an Arian, and afterwards a Socinian, I was only a convert, in company with many others; and was far from having any thoughts of troubling the world with publications on the subject. This I have been led to do by a series of events, of which I had no foresight, and of which I do not see the issue.

The conclusion that I have formed, with respect to the subject of this work, and my exertions in support of it, are, however, constantly ascribed by my opponents to a force of prejudice and prepossession, so strong as to pervert my judgment in the plainest of all cases. Of this I may not be a proper judge; but analogy may be some guide to myself as well as to others in this case.

Now, what appears to have been my disposition in other similar cases? Have I been particularly attached to *hypotheses* in philosophy, even to my own, which always create a stronger attachment than those of other persons? On the contrary, I will venture to say that no person is generally thought to be less so; nor has it been imagined that my pursuits have been at all defeated or injured, by any prepossession in favour of particular theories; and yet theories are as apt to mislead in philosophical as in any other subjects. I have always shewn the greatest readiness to abandon any hypothesis that I have advanced, and even defended, while I thought it defensible, the moment I have suspected it to be ill founded, whether the new facts that have refuted it were discovered by myself or others. My friends in general have blamed me for my extreme facility in this respect. And if I may judge of myself by my own feelings, after the closest examination that I can give myself, I am just the same with respect to theology.

In

In the course of my life I have held and defended opinions very different from those which I hold at present. Now, if my obstinacy in retaining and defending opinions had been so great as my opponents represent it, why did it not long ago put a stop to all my changes, and fix me a Trinitarian, or an Arian? Let those who have given stronger proofs of their minds being open to conviction than mine has been, throw the first stone at me.

I am well aware of the nature and force of that opposition and obloquy to which I am exposing myself in consequence of writing my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, the most valuable, I trust, of all my publications; and especially in consequence of the pains that have been taken to magnify and expose a few inaccuracies, to which all works of a similar nature, have been, and ever must be subject. But I have the fullest persuasion that the real oversights in it are of the smallest magnitude, and do not at all affect any one position or argument in my work, as I hope to satisfy all candid judges;

judges ; and as to mere cavil and reproach, I thank God, I am well able to bear it.

The odium I brought upon myself by maintaining the doctrines of *materialism* and *necessity*, without attempting to cover or soften terms of so frightful a sound, and without palliating any of their consequences, was unspeakably greater than what this business can bring upon me. At the beginning of that controversy I had few, very few indeed, of my nearest friends, who were with me in the argument. They, however, who knew me, knew my motives, and excused me ; but the christian world in general regarded me with the greatest abhorrence. I was considered as an unprincipled infidel, either an atheist, or in league with atheists. In this light I was repeatedly exhibited in all the public papers ; and the Monthly Review, and other Reviews, with all the similar publications of the day, joined in the popular cry. But a few years have seen the end of it. At least all that is left would not disturb the merest novice in these things. The consequence,

quence (which I now enjoy) is a great increase of materialists; not of atheistical ones, as some will still represent it, but of the most serious, the most rational, and consistent christians.

A similar issue I firmly expect from the present controversy, unpromising as it may appear in the eyes of some, who are struck with what is speciously and confidently urged. For my own part, I truly rejoice in the present appearance of things; as I foresee that much good will arise from the attention that will by this means be drawn upon the subject; and as I hope I respect the hand of God in every thing, I thank him for leading me into this business; as I hope to have occasion to thank him, some years hence, for leading me through it, and with as much advantage as I have been led through the other.

It is, indeed, my firm, and it is my joyful persuasion, that there is a wise Providence over-ruling all inquiries, as well as other events. The wisdom of God has appeared,

as

as I have endeavoured to point out, even in the corruptions of christianity, and the spread of error ; and it is equally conspicuous in the discovery and propagation of truth.

I am far from thinking, that that great Being who superintends all things, guides my pen, any more than he does that of my fiercest opponent ; but I believe that by means of our joint labours, and those of all who engage in theological controversy (which is eminently useful in rousing men to the utmost exertion of their faculties) he is promoting his own excellent purposes, and providing for the prevalence of truth, *in his own due time* ; and in this general prospect we ought all equally to rejoice.

It becomes us, however, to consider, that they only will be entitled to praise, who join in carrying on the designs of providence with *right views of their own* ; who are actuated by a real love of truth, and also by that candour and benevolence, which a
sense

sense of our common difficulties in the investigation of truth most effectually inspires. A man who has never changed an opinion, cannot have much feeling of this difficulty; and therefore cannot be expected to have much candour, unless his disposition be uncommonly excellent. I ought to have more candour than many others, because I have felt more than many can pretend to have done, the force of those obstacles which retard our progress in the search of truth.

With much tranquility, a tranquility acquired by habit, but more approaching to a pleasing alacrity, than to any uneasy apprehension, I shall wait the issue of the present controversy; freely retracting whatever I shall be found to have advanced with too little consideration; moderating any thing on which I shall appear to have laid too much stress, and urging with the greatest freedom every new argument or illustration that may occur to me, till I shall have nothing of consequence to alledge. After this I shall no longer

b

reply

reply to particular opponents, but content myself with making such *corrections* and *improvements* either in my *History*, or my intended *View of the doctrine of the first ages of the christian church, concerning the person of Christ*, as I may see necessary; submitting every thing to the judgment of those who may think proper to give any attention to the subject.

I cannot conclude this preface without cautioning our readers not to imagine that this is a mere trial of skill between me and my opponents. It is the opening of a serious and important controversy, tending to decide whether the christian church in the age of the apostles was unitarian or trinitarian; which, independently of any arguments from particular texts of scripture, will assist us to determine whether the doctrine of the trinity, which has had so long possession of the minds of the christian world, be a real doctrine of christianity, or one of its oldest and worst corruptions.

I wish to draw out the ablest men, both on the trinitarian and the Arian side of the question,

question; and I hope that I shall not long be the *principal* on the proper unitarian side. My Vindicator is much better qualified to take this place, and leave me that of *auxiliary*.

I would farther observe, that in a controversy so various and extensive as this will probably be, it should not be imagined that the question is absolutely decided when any particular advantage is gained on either side. All men are liable to oversights; but a judicious reader will consider the extent and consequences of an oversight, and particularly whether it affects the question itself, or the writer only.

Especially, let not persons, who are not themselves much conversant in ecclesiastical history, conclude that when any writer has gained a *seeming* advantage, it is therefore a *real* and *final* one, but let them wait till his opponent has been heard. On the first appearance of Dr. Horsley's Charge, many persons considered it as decisive against me. Others may now think as favourably of my side of the argument. But let all

persons suspend their judgment till they see that we have nothing of consequence to alledge farther, and let a reasonable time be given to each of us.

To the *Letters to Dr. Horsley*, I have subjoined a *Postscript* of supplemental and miscellaneous matters; and especially a *summary view* of all the evidence that I have hitherto been able to collect, and *maxims of historical criticism*, with which the several articles may be compared. I wish that my opponents would take the same, or any similar method, in order to bring the controversy to a more easy, speedy, and satisfactory termination,

I have likewise added some notice of the writer in the *Monthly Review* for September last, which contains a large answer to my reply to his former animadversions. It was certainly improper for a person who assumes the character of a *judge* to become a *party* in the dispute. With the intentions that he avows, of drawing me into a controversy, he ought to have left his former province

province of *reviewer* to another; and not to have availed himself of the prodigious advantage of the cheap and immense circulation which the Review gave him. As Dr. Horsley considers this writer (page 77) as *learned in ecclesiastical history*, and may wish to have him for an ally, let him not, like Commodus, throw his darts from a *stage*; but if he have any confidence in his own prowess, (of which he seems to have no distrust) let him, masked or unmasked, descend into the *arena* along with us.

THE

E R R A T A.

(b) Signifies *from the bottom*.

- P. 10. l. 1. for *or* read *nor*.
 21. l. 21. for *were* read *very*.
 58. l. 24. for *advantages* read *advantage*.
 60. l. 1. dele *then*.
 69. l. 1. (b) for *notion* read *motion*.
 124. l. 13. dele *early*.
 143. l. 13. for *a* read *the*.

C O R R E C T I O N S.

- P. 118. l. 2. (b) for *almost the whole* read *a great part*.
 32. l. 17. read *It is little more than one page out of four hundred*.

T H E C O N T E N T S.

	Page
<i>THE Preface</i> - - - - -	i
<i>An introductory Letter</i> - - - - -	1

L E T T E R I.

<i>Of the Argument from the writings of the Apostles and the apostolical Fathers</i> - -	7
--	---

L E T T E R II.

<i>Of the distinction between the Ebionites and the Nazarenes</i> - - - - -	14
---	----

L E T T E R III.

<i>That the primitive Unitarians were not considered as Heretics</i> - - - - -	25
--	----

L E T T E R IV.

<i>Of the inference that may be drawn from the passage of Athanasius, concerning the opinion of the early Jewish Christians relating to Christ</i> - - - - -	37
--	----

L E T T E R V.

<i>An argument for the late origin of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, from the difficulty of tracing the time in which it was first divulged</i> - - - - -	55
--	----

C O N T E N T S.

L E T T E R VI.

<i>Of the personification of the Logos</i>	Page 65
--	------------

L E T T E R VII.

<i>Considerations relating to the doctrine of the Tri- nity.</i>	75
--	----

L E T T E R VIII.

<i>Miscellaneous Articles</i>	102
<i>The CONCLUDING LETTER</i>	109

P O S T S C R I P T

<i>I. Passages from Origen, referred to p. 19, 20, 21.</i>	117
<i>II. Of Heresy in early times</i>	118
<i>III. Of the conduct of the Apostles</i>	120
<i>IV. Of the excommunication of Theodotus by Victor</i>	121
<i>V. Of Justin Martyr's account of the knowledge of some christians of low rank</i>	124
<i>VI. Of the passage in Justin Martyr concerning the Unitarians of his time</i>	127
<i>VII. Of the first author of the doctrine of the per- manent personality of the Logos</i>	134
<i>VIII. Maxims of historical criticism</i>	135
<i>XI. A summary view of the evidence for the primi- tive christians having held the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ.</i>	140
<i>X. A Reply to the Monthly Review, for Sep- tember, 1783</i>	148
<i>APPENDIX</i>	161

A N

A N

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

AS it is my earnest wish, that every subject of importance may be fully investigated, I am happy to find that you have done me the honour to animadvert on my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, in your late *Charge to the Clergy, at St. Alban's*, as you formerly did on my *Treatise on Philosophical Necessity*, in a *Sermon*. I was in hopes that my reply to the latter would have led you to pursue the argument with me to its proper termination. But though I failed in my attempts to engage your assistance in that inquiry, I flatter myself that I shall be more successful in this; especially as, by the temper and style of your performance, you seem to interest yourself more deeply in this subject, imagining, no doubt, and very justly, that much more depends upon it.

You have given, however, a degree of importance to my work, which I own I had not thought of myself, when you say to your reverend brethren, p. 5, " You will easily conjecture that what has led " me to these reflections, is the extraordinary attempt " which has lately been made to unsettle the faith, and " to break up the constitution, of every ecclesiastical " establishment in christendom. Such is the avowed " object of a recent publication, which bears the

B

" title

“ title of a *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*,
“ among which the Catholic doctrine of the trinity
“ holds a principal place.”

Now I see nothing so very extraordinary in my attempt. I have only done what has been done by every other person, who has endeavoured to refute the doctrine of the trinity, or any other essential article of established churches. However, as you seem to have taken so particular an alarm in this case, I am willing to hope you will exert yourself with proportionable vigour; when, in your apprehension, it is no less than *to save a falling state*. Before I enter upon the subject itself, I must endeavour to set you right with respect to two preliminary circumstances.

Whether it be to my credit or not, I must observe, that you make my reading to be more extensive than it is, when you suppose me to have borrowed my principal arguments from D. Zwicker, or Episcopius. I do assure you, Sir, I do not recollect that I ever met with the name of Zwicker before I saw it in this publication of yours. For Episcopius I have the highest reverence; and I thank you for informing me that, though an Arian himself, he was convinced that the christian church was originally what is now called Socinian.

On the other hand, by your recommending *Bishop Bull's defence of the Nicene faith* so very strongly, and not mentioning any other modern writers, you seem to have overlooked, or to have undervalued

undervalued, several works which may certainly be very useful to those who wish to form an impartial judgment on the subject of this controversy; especially *Whitby's Disquisitiones Modestæ*, in answer to Bishop Bull, and his *Replies to Waterland*, with several pieces in the *Socinian Tracts*, in three small volumes 4to. But I am more particularly surprized that you should not have mentioned *Dr. Clark's* celebrated *Treatise on the Trinity*, which is calculated to be of the greatest use to those who would study this subject; containing all the texts that relate to it, most advantageously arranged for the purpose, together with some very useful references to the christian fathers. There are several parts of that work which I would take the liberty to recommend to your own particular attention.

You charge me with *arguing in a circle*, saying, p. 12, "It is the professed object of his undertaking to exhibit a view of the gradual changes of opinions, in order to ascertain the faith of the first ages. And he would ascertain the faith of the first ages in order to settle the sense of the scriptures in disputed points. He is therefore not at liberty to assume any sense of the scriptures, which, because it is his own, he may be pleased to call the clear sense, for a proof that the original faith was such as would confirm the sense he wishes to establish."

"So long," you say, "as the sixth page of the first volume of *Dr. Priestley's History* shall be

“ extant, the masters of the dialectic art will be at
 “ no loss for an example of the circulating syllo-
 “ gism.” But unless they be provided with one
 already, you must look out for them elsewhere, as
 this you have now pitched upon will not answer
 their purpose, if they be really masters of the
 dialectic art.

Had I produced no other proof of the unitarianism
 of the *scriptures*, besides that of the *primitive*
church, and also no other proof of the unitarianism of
 the primitive church, besides that of the *scriptures*,
 I should have argued in a circle. But you will
 find that I have been far from doing this.

Is it not usual with all writers who wish to prove
two things, which mutually prove each other, to
 observe that they *do* prove each other ; and there-
 fore, that whatever evidence can be alledged for
 either of them is fully in point with respect to the
 other ? Now this is all that I have done with
 respect to the unitarianism of the *scriptures*, and
 of the *primitive church*, which prove each other ;
 only that, in my *History*, I do not profess to enter
 into the separate proof of the unitarian doctrine from
 the *scriptures*.

This I there take for granted had been sufficiently
 done already by myself and others ; and I therefore
 proceed to prove the unitarianism of the *primitive*
church from *independent evidence* ; only observing
 that the unitarian doctrine having been taught by the
 apostles

apostles is likewise a proof of the same thing. But this I could not suppose would have any weight with those who are trinitarians, though it was not improper to mention it with respect to others, with whom it would have weight.

I might have urged another kind of argument against both the divinity and the pre-existence of Christ, viz. from the doctrine of the materiality of man, which I presume has been sufficiently proved in my *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*. I maintain that there is no more reason why *a man* should be supposed to have an immaterial principle within him, than that *a dog*, *a plant*, or *a magnet*, should have one; because, in all these cases, there is just the same difficulty in imagining any connexion between the visible matter of which they consist, and the invisible powers of which they are possessed. If *universal concomitance* be the foundation of all our reasoning concerning causes and effects, the organized brain of a man must be deemed to be the proper seat, and immediate cause of his sensation and thinking, as much as the inward structure of a magnet, whatever that be, is the cause of its power of attracting iron.

This is a very short and plain argument, perfectly consonant to all our reasoning in philosophy; and it is conclusive against the doctrine of a soul, and consequently against the whole system of pre-existence. If then Peter, James, and John, had no pre-existent state, it must be contrary to all analogy

to suppose Jesus to have pre-existed. His being a prophet, and having a power of working miracles, can make no just exception in his favour; for then every preceding prophet must have pre-existed.

I think I have also proved in my *Disquisitions*, that the doctrine of a *soul*, as a substance distinct from the body, and capable of being happy or miserable when the body is in the grave, was borrowed from pagan philosophy, is totally repugnant to the system of revelation, and unknown in the scriptures; which speak of no reward for the righteous, or punishment for the wicked, before the general resurrection, and the coming of Christ to judge the world.

I might therefore have urged that, since the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence, is contrary to reason, and was never taught by Christ or his apostles, it could not have been the faith of their immediate disciples, in the first ages of christianity. This argument will have its weight with those who reject the doctrine of a soul, and make them look with suspicion upon any pretended proof of the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence, and of its having been the faith of the apostolical age, as well as their previous persuasion that such is not the doctrine of the scriptures. And since all the three positions are capable of independent proof, the urging of them would not have been *arguing in a circle*, but the adducing of proper *collateral evidence*.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R I.

*Of the Argument from the writings of the Apostles
and the apostolical Fathers.*

DEAR SIR,

BEFORE I consider what you have said with respect to the apostolical fathers, I must take some notice of what you have advanced with respect to the argument from *scripture*; though, in this *Charge*, you do not professedly go upon that ground.

You take it for granted that the *logos*, mentioned in the introduction to the gospel of John, must be a *person*, and not a mere *attribute*, because it is referred to by the pronoun *εἷς*. “This *person*,” you say, “(for that is the natural force of the Greek pronoun *εἷς*) this person was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, &c.” Whereas, this pronoun may refer to any thing that is of the same gender in the Greek language, whether it be a person or not; and it requires but a moderate acquaintance with the New Testament to observe instances of it even there; as in Matt. vii. 12. οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ νόμος *This is the law*, and Rev. xx. 14. οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ δεύτερος θάνατος, *This is the second death*.

The same pronoun refers to the *temple*, *ναὸς* John ii. 20; to *bread*, *ἄρτος*, John vi. 50;

to *stones*, λιθοι. Matt. iv. 3, Acts iv. 11; a *salutation*, ασπασμος, Luke i. 29, and not less than eight times to λογος, where it certainly means nothing more than *speech*, as Matt. xxviii. 15, &c. To satisfy yourself, only look into any Concordance of the Greek testament.

The *logos* of John, therefore, may be a mere attribute of the Father, though it be the antecedent to the pronoun *εγος*. For you will hardly say that the *law*, or *death*, or the *temple*, &c. &c. is a real person, capable of intention and action. Besides, I do suppose that John uses a *figurative personification*, which would require the same forms of speech as if he had intended to speak of a real person.

You also find a reference to the pre-existent state of our Saviour in 1 John iv. 2, where it is said *every Spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God*; by which you say, p. 15, “the opinion that Christ was truly a man is very awkwardly and unnaturally expressed. The “turn of the expression,” you add, “seems to lead “to the notion of a being who had his choice of “different ways of coming.”

On the other hand, I think the phrase sufficiently similar to other Jewish phrases, of which we find various examples in the scriptures, and that it may be explained by the phrase *partaker of flesh*.

flesh and blood, Hebrews ii. 14. If the word *coming* must necessarily mean *coming from heaven*, and imply a pre-existent state, John the Baptist must have pre-existed: for our Saviour uses that expression concerning him, as well as concerning himself, Matt. xi. 18, 19. *John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a demon. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, &c.* It may also be asserted with more certainty still concerning all the apostles that they pre-existed; for our Saviour, in his prayer for them, respecting their mission, makes use of the term, *world*, which is not found in, 1 John iv. 2, where he says, John xvii. 18. *As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world.*

The phrase *coming in the flesh*, in my opinion, refers very naturally to the doctrine of the Gnostics, who supposed Christ to be a super-angelic spirit, which descended from heaven, and entered into the body of Jesus. The phrase *he that should come, or who was to come* (his coming having being foretold by the prophets) appears to have been familiar to the Jews, to denote the Messiah: but with them it certainly did not imply any coming down from heaven, because they had no such idea concerning their Messiah.

I see no trace, therefore, in the epistle of John of any more than *one heresy*. He neither expressly
says,

says, or hints that there were *two*; and part of his description of this one heresy evidently points to that of the Gnostics, as is acknowledged by yourself; and this heresy was as different as possible from that of the Ebionites. The early writers who speak of them mention them as *two opposite heresies*, existing in the same early period; so that it is very improbable *a priori*, that “the same expression,” as you say, p. 16, “should be equally levelled at “them both.” Gnosticism being certainly condemned therefore by the apostle, and not the doctrine of the Ebionites, I conclude that in the latter, which is allowed to have existed in his time, he saw nothing worthy of censure; but that it was the doctrine which he himself had taught. If this apostle had thought as you do with respect to it, why did he not censure it unequivocally, as you do, and with as much severity?

Tertullian, indeed, maintained, that by those who denied that *Christ was come in the flesh*, John meant the Gnostics, and that by those who denied that *Jesus was the son of God*, he meant the Ebionites*. He had no idea that the former expression only could include both. But as the Gnostics maintained that *Jesus* and *the Christ* were different persons, the latter having come from heaven, and being the son of God, whereas Jesus was the son of man only, the expression of *Jesus being the son of God* is as directly

* De Præscriptione Hæreticorum, sect. xxxiii. p. 214.

opposed

opposed to the doctrine of the Gnostics as that of *Christ coming in the flesh*.

You say, p. 17, "It appears, therefore, that to
 "confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and
 "to affirm that Jesus Christ is truly a man, are pro-
 "positions not perfectly equivalent. Dr. Priestley
 "indeed has shewn himself very sensible of the dif-
 "ference. He would not have otherwise found it
 "necessary for the improvement of his argument,
 "in reciting the third verse of the 4th chapter of St.
 "John's 1st epistle, to change the expression which
 "he found in the public translation, for another
 "which corresponds far less exactly with the Greek
 "text. For the words that Jesus Christ is come
 "in the flesh, Dr. Priestley substitutes these, Jesus
 "Christ is come of the flesh." You add afterwards,
 "He might think it no unwarrantable liberty to
 "correct an expression, which, as not perfectly
 "corresponding with his own system, he could not
 "entirely approve. It would have been but fair to
 "advertise his readers of so capital an emendation.
 "An emendation for which no support is to be
 "found in the Greek text, nor even in the varieties
 "of any MSS."

I am sorry, Sir, that my printer, or my own
 mistake, should have given you all this trouble in
 consulting MSS. &c. I do assure you I had no
 knowledge of having made a change in a single word
 in copying that text, nor should I have wished to
 have made any change at all in it; thinking that,

as it now stands, it is quite as much for my purpose as that which you suppose I have purposely substituted in its place. Had you thought me capable of an attempt of this kind, you should not have ascribed to me, as you have done, the greatest *purity of intention* in all that I have written on this subject.

I now proceed to remark on what you have observed from Clemens Romanus, concerning the pre-existence of Christ.

You think that, through my excessive zeal for an hypothesis, I make every thing to favour it : but I hardly think that you can find any thing in my attempt to support the Socinian doctrine, that discovers more zeal than you manifest in support of the Athanasian one; and I think that excessive zeal has misled you in as remarkable a manner as you suppose mine to have misled me. I can no otherwise account for your asserting, p. 16, That
 “ the notion of Christ having had his choice of
 “ different ways of coming into the world, is
 “ explicitly expressed in a book little inferior in
 “ authority to the canonical writings, in the first
 “ epistle of Clemens Romanus, in a passage of
 “ that epistle which Dr. Priestley, somewhat un-
 “ fortunately for his cause, has chosen for the basis
 “ of an argument of that holy Father’s heterodoxy.
 “ The scepter of the majesty of God, says Clemens,
 “ Our Lord Jesus Christ, came not in the pomp of
 “ pride and arrogance, *although he had it in his*
 “ *power.* Clemens it seems conceived that the
 “ manner

“ manner of coming was in the power and choice
“ of the person who was to come.”

Of this I have no doubt, but the question is from *whence* he was then to come. Clemens does not say that it was *from heaven to earth*. That is entirely your own interpretation, for which I see no ground at all ; since the phrase is so easily explained by his entering upon his commission, as a public teacher ; when, being invested with the power of working miracles, he never made any ostentatious display of it, or indeed exerted it for his own benefit in any respect.

Besides Clemens Romanus, you refer to the epistles of Ignatius, for a proof of the early knowledge of the doctrine of Christ's divinity. “ The
“ holy Father,” you say, p. 19, “ hardly ever
“ mentions Christ without introducing some ex-
“ plicit assertion of his divinity, or without joining
“ with the name of Christ some epithet in which
“ it is implied.” All this is very true, according to our present copies of Ignatius's epistles. But you must know that the genuineness of them is not only very much doubted, but generally given up by the learned ; and it was not perfectly ingenuous in you to conceal that circumstance. First prove those epistles, as we now have them, to be the genuine writings of Ignatius, and then make all the use of them that you can.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

Of the distinction between the Ebionites and the Nazarenes.

Dear Sir,

IT has been imagined by some, that there was a difference between the doctrine of the Ebionites, and that of the Nazarenes concerning the person of Christ; the former disbelieving the miraculous conception, and the latter maintaining it; whereas I have said that I can find no sufficient authority for that difference; that which has been thought to have been the peculiar opinion of the Nazarenes, being expressly ascribed to one branch of the Ebionites, by Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, and perhaps other ancient writers.

And as to any Nazarenes who believed that Christ was any thing more than man, I find no trace of them in history; so that it is highly probable that the Nazarenes of the second century were the same people with those of the first, or the primitive Jewish Christians, and that they were called Ebionites by way of reproach.

To the arguments from Origen and Eusebius you say nothing, but with respect to that from Epiphanius your conduct is very particular indeed. On my saying that "Epiphanius expressly says that Ebion held the same opinion with the Nazarenes," you say, p. 77, "The only inference

“ inference to be made from this assertion is
 “ this, that Dr. Priestley has never troubled
 “ himself to read more of Epiphanius’s account
 “ of the Ebionites than the first eleven words of
 “ the first sentence. Had he read the first sen-
 “ tence to the end, he would have found that
 “ Ebion, although he arose from the school of
 “ the Nazarenes, and held similar opinions,
 “ preached also other doctrines, of which he was
 “ the first inventor. Among these novelties, by
 “ the consent of all antiquity, though not with
 “ Dr. Priestley’s leave, we place the mere huma-
 “ nity of Christ, with or without the miraculous
 “ conception.”

I shall not return your offensive language, but had you yourself read the second paragraph in this section, you would have found that your remark had no foundation whatever. For it there appears, that though, according to this writer, the Ebionites and Nazarenes did differ in some other particulars, it was not with respect even to the miraculous conception, much less with respect to the doctrine of the mere humanity of Christ.

He says, in the middle of the first section, “ that Ebion,” whom, in the 24th section, he makes to be cotemporary with the apostle John, “ borrowed his abominable rites from “ the Samaritans, his opinion (γνωμην) from the
 “ Nazarenes,

“Nazarenes, his name from the Jews*, &c.” And he says, in the beginning of the second section, “he was cotemporary with the former, “and had the same origin with them; and “first he asserted that Christ was born of the “commerce and seed of man, namely Joseph, “as we signified above,” referring to the first words of his first section, “when we said that “in other respects, he agreed with them all, and “differed from them only in this, viz. in his “adherence to the laws of the Jews with respect “to the sabbath, circumcision, and other things “that were enjoined by the Jews and Samaritans. “He moreover adopted many more things than “the Jews, in imitation of the Samaritans†,” the particulars of which he then proceeds to mention.

In the same section he speaks of the Ebionites inhabiting the same country as the Nazarenes,

* Σαμαρείων μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἔχει τὸ ἑδελυρον. Ἰουδαίων τε τὸ ὄνομα. Οὐσίων δὲ καὶ Ναζωραίων καὶ Νασσαρειῶν τὴν γνῶμην— καὶ Χριστιανῶν βουλέσαι ἔχειν τὴν προσηγορίαν. *Hæc.* 30. Sect. i. p. 125.

† Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Ἐβίων συχρονῶν μὲν τῶν ὑπάρχοντων, ἀπ' αὐτῶν δὲ συν αὐτοῖς ὁρμαίνει. τὰ πρῶτα δὲ ἐκ παραβίβης καὶ σπερματικῆς ἀνδρός, τῆς ἐν τῷ Ἰωσήφ, τὸν Χριστὸν γεγενῆσθαι, εἰπὼν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἡμῖν προειρήνισται, ὅτι τὰ ἴσα τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐν ἀπασὶ φρονῶν, ἐν τῷ μόνῳ διαφέρει, ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ προσανέχειν, κατὰ σαβατισμὸν, καὶ κατὰ τὴν περιτομὴν, καὶ κατὰ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ὅσα περὶ παρὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ὁμοίως τοῖς Σαμαρείαις διαπραττέσθαι. *ib.* Sect. ii. p. 125, 126.

and

and adds that, “agreeing together, they communicated of their perverseness to each other*.” Then, in the third section, he observes that afterwards some of the Ebionites entertained a different opinion concerning Christ, than that he was the son of Joseph; supposing that after Elxæus joined them, they learned of him “some fancy concerning Christ and the holy spirit †.”

Concerning the Nazarenes, in the 7th section of his account of them, he says that they were Jews in all respects, except “that they believed in Christ; but I do not know whether they hold the miraculous conception, or not‡.” This amounts to no more than a doubt, which he afterwards abandoned, by asserting that the Ebionites held the same opinion concerning Christ with the Nazarenes, which opinion he expressly states to be their belief, that Jesus was a mere man, and the son of Joseph.

I now appeal to yourself whether this does not abundantly justify my quoting the authority of

* Ενθεν ἀρχεῖται τῆς κακῆς αὐτῆς διδασκαλίας, οὗθεν ἐπηρθεὶς καὶ Ναζαρηνοὶ οἱ ἀνομοὶ προδεδηλωμένοι. Συναφθεῖς γὰρ οὐτεὶς ἐκείνοις, καὶ ἐκεῖνοι τυτῶ, ἐκάλειρος ἀπο τῆς εαυτῆς μοχθηρίας τῷ εἴρω μετέδωκε. Hæc. 30. Sect. ii. p. 125, 126.

† Φαντασίαν τινα περὶ Χριστοῦ διηγιέσθαι, καὶ περὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου. Ibid. Sect. iii. p. 127.

‡ Περὶ Χριστοῦ δὲ καὶ οἶδα εἰπεῖν εἰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τῇ τῶν προσηρμημένων περὶ Κηρινθοῦ καὶ Μηριμθὸν μοχθηρίᾳ ἀχθεῖντες, φίλον ἀνθρώπον νομίζουσιν, ἢ καθὼς ἡ ἀληθεῖα ἐχει, διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου γεγενησθαι ἐκ Μαρίας, διαβέβαιον ἔστι. Hæc. 29. Sect. vii. Vol. i. p. 123.

C

Epi-

Epiphanius, whatever that may be, in support of the Ebionites and Nazarenes having held the same opinion concerning Christ, though they might differ in other things. Please also to observe that these Nazarenes were prior to Ebion, who was himself co-temporary with the apostle John.

You acknowledge, p. 29, that, "in Jerom's time the Nazarenes were so far declined from the pure faith of the first race of Christians, and were become heretical to that degree, that Jerom considered them as a Jewish sect, rather than a Christian." How much earlier this general defection took place you do not say. It appears, however, as you do not deny, that the unbelieving Jews called all those of their race, who were christians, by the name of Ebionites, in the time of Origen. Indeed Origen's own words are too express to admit any doubt of this. "Those," says he, "of the Jews who believe that Jesus is the Christ, are called Ebionites". And these Ebionites Origen says were of *two sorts*, one of them believing the miraculous conception, and the other not; but all of them considering Christ as a mere man.

You say, indeed, p. 35, that "the word Ebionite had, in the time of Origen, out-grown its original meaning; for at last the Nazarenes,

* Εβιωναίοι χρηματίζουσιν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὡς Χριστὸν παραδείξασθαι. In Celsus, Lib. ii. p. 56.

" whose error was rather a superstitious severity
 " in their practice, than any deficiency in their
 " faith, were included by Origen in the infamy of
 " the appellation." But for this I must require
 some other evidence than your bare conjecture ;
 for then he ought to have made *three* sorts of
 Ebionites, and not *two* only, which he expressly
 does.

That the Ebionites comprized all the Jewish
 Christians in the time of Origen, is evident from
 the passage which you yourself quote from him,
 p. 76. " When you consider what belief they,
 " of the Jewish race, who believe in Jesus, enter-
 " tain of their redeemer, some thinking that he
 " took his being from Mary and Joseph, some
 " indeed from Mary only and the divine spirit,
 " but still without any belief of his divinity, you
 " will understand," &c. Now I do not at all see
 how, allowing the object of Origen, in the place
 in which this passage is introduced, to be the *spi-*
ritualizing of a plain story, you can be authorized
 to explain this otherwise than it is literally ex-
 pressed. Whatever the discourse be, this is an
 incidental mention of a real fact in the course of
 it ; and such is often the clearest of all evidences.

As to that reference to Origen which you say, p.
 75. you are not able to trace, it is exactly as I have
 made it in my edition of his works in Latin ; and
 in my opinion abundantly answers the purpose for
 which it was adduced, as he there speaks of all

the Jews who believed in Jesus, as thinking him to be either the son of Joseph and Mary, or of Mary and the holy spirit, which certainly comprizes the opinion which had been thought to be peculiar to the Nazarenes; so that it is impossible that Origen should have imagined that the Nazarenes held an opinion concerning Christ that was not also held by some of the Ebionites. Moreover, as he is here speaking of the Jewish christians *in general*, without making any exception, it is natural to infer, that he had never heard of any Jewish christians besides those whom he elsewhere calls Ebionites, of the two sorts particularly specified by him; so that this passage is in effect the same with that which you have quoted, and proves more than I there quoted it for.

I have since procured Huetius's edition of Origen's Commentaries on the scriptures, and find that the passage which you have quoted exactly corresponds to that which I had made use of. But the original Greek is more expressly to my purpose than the Latin.

In a passage not far distant from this, Origen considers the Ebionites in general as not believing the miraculous conception, while the gentile christians in general, though with some exceptions, believed that doctrine. "By the men," he says, "who blamed the blind man, who represents the Ebionites (unbelievers in the miraculous conception) we may understand the gentiles, who, with

“ with few exceptions, think that Christ was
 “ born of the Virgin only*.”

“ That the Jewish converts were remarkably
 “ prone to the Ebionæan heresy, from which the
 “ gentile churches in general were pure, is the
 “ most,” you say, p. 77. “ that can be concluded from
 “ this passage, strengthened as it might be with
 “ another somewhat to the same purpose, in the
 “ commentaries upon St. John’s gospel. But
 “ what if it were proved that the whole sect of
 “ the Nazarenes was absorbed in the Ebionæan
 “ heresy in the days of Origen? What evidence
 “ would that afford of the identity of the Nazarenes
 “ and the Ebionites in earlier times? And even
 “ that identity, if it were proved, what evidence
 “ would it afford, that the church of Jerusalem
 “ had been originally unitarian under her first
 “ bishops of the circumcision.”

I answer that if the Jewish christians were
 universally Ebionites in the time of Origen, the
 probability is, that they were even generally so in
 the time of the apostles; and that their heresy, as
 it is called, did exist in the time of the apostles, is
 abundantly evident. Whole bodies of men do not
 very soon change their opinions. And if, as you
 allow, the Jewish christians were distinguished by
 the name of Nazarenes (whom I think I have
 proved to be the same with the Ebionites, who all
 believed Christ to be a mere man) from the time
 that they were settled in the country beyond the

*. Comment. in Matt. vol. i. p. 428.

sea of Galilee, you carry the opinions of the Ebionites, as universally held by the Jewish christians to the very age of the apostles; for they retired into that country on the approach of the Jewish war, about which time the apostles went off the stage.

Since all the Jewish christians were called Nazarenes or Ebionites, and all the writers that mention them speak of the doctrine of those sects *in general*, and not those of *their own time* in particular, as being that Christ was a mere man; the natural inference is, that those sects, or the Jewish christians, did *in all times*, after they became so distinguished (which is allowed to have been just before, or presently after the destruction of Jerusalem) hold that doctrine. And supposing this to have been the case, is it not almost certain, that the apostles themselves must have taught it? Can it be supposed that the whole Jewish church should have abandoned the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, within so few years after the death of the apostles, if they had ever received it from them? As far as I yet see, Jewish christians who were not Nazarenes, or Ebionites, or Nazarenes who held any other doctrine concerning Christ than that he was a mere man, are unknown in history, and have no existence but in imagination.

That those who were called *Nazarenes* were as far from thinking Christ to be God as the *Ebionites*, is evident from the most unexceptionable evidence. Among others, is the testimony of *Theodoret*,

doret, though, not having the original, I am obliged to quote it at second hand. This I shall do from *Suicer's Thesaurus*, under the article *Ebion*. He says, "the Nazarenes are Jews, who respect Christ as a righteous man*." And Theodoret lived in Syria, where he had the best opportunity of being acquainted with the state of the Jewish churches.

It is rather extraordinary that such a point should now be made of finding some difference of importance between the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, when no critic, I believe, of any name in the last age pretended to find any. The learned Jeremiah Jones, after disposing in opposite columns all that he could collect concerning them both, from the best authorities, concludes with saying, "It is plain there was a very great agreement between these two ancient sects; and though they went under different names, yet they seem only to differ in this, that the Ebionites had made some addition to the old Nazarene system. For Origen tells us they were called Ebionites, who from among the Jews owned Jesus to be the Christ†." The running title of this chapter is, *The Nazarenes and Ebionites the same*.

As to the general testimony of Eusebius, and other writers, themselves believers in the divinity

* Οἱ δὲ Ναζωραῖοι Ἰουδαῖοι εἰς τοῦ Χριστοῦ τιμῶντες καὶ ἀνθρώπων δίκαιον.

† Jones on the Canon, vol i. p. 386.

of Christ, that the church of Jerusalem towards the close of the apostolic age (for it is not pretended that the apostles taught that doctrine clearly, and therefore not with effect, at the opening of their commission) was orthodox in their sense of the word, it is not to be regarded, unless they bring some sufficient proof of their assertion. They were, no doubt, willing to have it thought so; and, without considering it very particularly, might presume that it was so: but the facts which they themselves record, and the account which they give of the conduct of the apostles in divulging this doctrine to the Jews, make it highly improbable that the case should have been, as in general terms they assert.

They furnish as particular evidence against their own general testimony, as we can expect to find at this distance of time, supposing the fact to have been the reverse of what they assert; and the state of things in after times, and even in their own, was such as can never be accounted for, agreeably to the known principles of human nature, on the supposition that it was originally such as they represent it to be. The general prevalence of the unitarian doctrine among the common people in the Gentile world, and the universal prevalence of it among the Jews, from the time that they were distinguished by the name of Ebionites, or Nazarenes (which was immediately after the age of the apostles) is totally inconsistent with the idea of the divinity of Christ
having

having been the universal, or the general opinion in the time of the apostles.

I am, &c,

L E T T E R III.

That the primitive Unitarians were not considered as Heretics.

DEAR SIR,

AMONG the *extravagant assertions*, as you call them, of D. Zwicker, and which you say were adopted by Episcopius, you mention, p. 7. that of “ the opinion of the mere humanity
“ of Christ having prevailed very generally in the
“ first ages, and having never been deemed here-
“ tical by the fathers of the orthodox persuasion,
“ at least not in such a degree as to exclude them
“ from the communion of the church.” But you say that Episcopius, “ from his charitable temper,
“ gave easy credit to the unitarian writers, when
“ they represented the differences of opinion in the
“ early churches as much greater than ever really
“ obtained, and the tenderness for sectaries as
“ more than was ever practised.”

If I was disposed to copy your usual language to me upon this occasion, I might have full scope;

as

as what you now advance is the very reverse of the fact; and how you came to misapprehend so plain a case, concerning which I believe no writers of ecclesiastical history ever differed, I do not take upon me to say, but leave others to judge. That there were as proper unitarians in the very age of the apostles, as any who are so termed at this day (myself by no means excepted) and differing as much from what is now called the orthodox faith, I will venture to say was never questioned; and that these ancient unitarians were not then expelled from christian societies, as heretics, is, I believe, as generally allowed. It was, as you say, acknowledged by Episcopius the Arian, and it is likewise allowed by Mosheim the trinitarian, who says, vol. i. p. 191. "However ready many may have
 " been to embrace this erroneous doctrine, it does
 " not appear that this sect formed to themselves a
 " separate place of worship, or removed themselves
 " from the ordinary assemblies of christians." But does it not also follow from the same fact, that these unitarians were not expelled from christian societies by others, as they certainly would have been, if they had been considered as heretics?

At the same time the Gnostics were in a very different predicament, and had been so from the beginning. Mosheim says, vol. i. p. 108. "From
 " several passages of the sacred writings, it evi-
 " dently appears, that even in the first century,
 " the general meetings of christians were deserted,
 " and separate assemblies formed, in several places,
 " by

“ by persons infected with the Gnostic heresy;
 “ though,” he adds, “ this sect was not con-
 “ spicuous for its numbers, or reputation, before
 “ the time of Adrian.”

“ Every heretic,” says Jerom, “ is born in the
 “ church, but is cast out of the church, and fights
 “ against the church*.” Austin says, “ As soon
 “ as any heresy existed, it separated itself from the
 “ Catholic church†.” Tertullian says, “ If they
 “ be heretics, they cannot be christians‡.”

That Tertullian did not consider unitarians as excluded from the name and the assemblies of christians, is evident from what he says concerning the *apostle's creed*, the several articles of which, as it stood in his time, he recites; asserting that it was the only proper standard of faith, and that the church admitted of a variety of opinions in other respects.

* Omnis enim hæreticus nascitur in ecclesia, sed de ecclesia projicitur, et contendit et pugnat contra parentem. In Jerem. 22. vol. iv. p. 277.

† Statem enim unaquæque heræsis ut existerat, et a congregatione Catholicæ communionis exibat, &c. De Baptismo Contra Donatistas, Lib. 5. cap. 19. vol. vii. p. 446.

‡ Si enim hæretici sunt, Christiani esse non possunt. De Præscriptione Hæreticorum, sect. xxxvii. p. 215.

Tertullian, in his treatise De Præscriptione Hæreticorum, makes but slight mention of the heresy of the *Ebionites*, and when he gives it that appellation, he makes it to consist in the “ observance and defence of circumcision and the law;” and yet he represents Hebion as comprized under the description of

Now it is evident that no article in that creed alludes to the opinions of the *unitarians*, but only to those of the *Gnostics*. This was the oldest formulary of christian faith, and what was taught to all catechumens before baptism; and additions were made to it from time to time, in order to exclude heretics. This creed any unitarian, at least one who believed the miraculous conception, might subscribe in the time of Tertullian, and therefore could not then have been deemed a heretic.

“ The rule of faith,” he says, “ is only one, admitting of no change or emendation, requiring us to believe in one God, almighty, the maker of the world; and in his son Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised from the dead on the third day, received up into heaven, now sitting at the right hand of the Father, and who will come again to judge the living and the dead, even by the resurrection of the flesh. This law of faith remaining, other things, being matters of discipline and conduct, admit of new corrections, the grace of God co-operating *.”

of *Antichrist* by St. John, p. 214. It is evident, however, from his making the unitarians to be the *greater part* of believers, that, in his time, they were not considered as *so far heretical*, or *anti-christian*, as to be excluded from christian churches.

* Regula quidem fidei una omnino est, sola, immobilis, et irreformabilis, credendi scilicet in unicum deum, omnipotentem, mundi conditorem, et filium ejus Jesum Christum, natum

The Ebionites, being Jews, had little communication with the Gentiles, and therefore, of course, held separate assemblies; but the Alogi, who held the same doctrine among the Gentiles, had no separate assemblies, but worshipped along with other christians. Indeed their having no general distinct name before the time of Epiphanius, is of itself a proof that they had no separate places of worship, as the Gnostics and other heretics had. For had they been distinguished from other christians in their assemblies, it is impossible but they must have been distinguished by a *specific name*. They had, indeed, in particular places, names given them occasionally, from particular persons, who distinguished themselves by the defence of their doctrines, as Artemonites, Noetians, &c. but the general body of unitarians among the Gentiles had no name given them *from the beginning* to distinguish them from other christians, till the attempt made by Epiphanius to call them Alogi. In controversy they sometimes distinguished themselves by the name of *Monarchists*, as holding the monarchy, or supremacy of the father, in opposition to those who maintained the divinity of the son; but this was only an occasional, and not an original or permanent appellation.

natum ex Virgine Maria, crucifixum sub Pontio Pilato, tertia die resuscitatum a mortuis, receptum in cælis, sedentem nunc ad dextram patris, venturum judicare vivos et mortuos, per carnis etiam resurrectionem. Hac lege fidei manente, cætera jam disciplinæ et conversationis, admittunt novitatem correctionis, operante scilicet et proficiente usque ad finem gratia dei. De Virginibus velandis, sect. i. p. 173.

All therefore that Chrysostom could alledge in proof of himself and his friends being of the orthodox faith, and no heretics, might have been alledged by the body of unitarians before the time of Theodotus. Teaching unbelievers how to distinguish between orthodox christians and sectaries, he says, "They have some persons by whom they are called. According to the name of the Heresiarch, so is the sect; but no man has given us a name, but the faith itself." Again he says, "Were we ever separated from the church? Have we Heresiarchs? Have we any name from men, as Marcion gave his name to some, Manichæus to others, and Arius to a third part?" &c. *

All this agrees remarkably well with the supposition, that these unitarians were originally nothing less than the whole body of Christians, and that the trinitarians were the innovators; appearing at first modest and candid, as was natural while they were a small minority, but bold and imperious when they became the majority.

* Εκαίνοι ἔχουσιν τινὰς ἀφ' ὧν καλοῦνται, αὐτὲ τε αἰρεσιάρχῃς, δηλοῦσι τὸ ὄνομα, καὶ ἕκαστη αἵρεσις ὁμοίως. παρ' ἡμῖν ἀνὴρ μὲν εἰς ἐδωκεν ἡμῖν ὄνομα, ἡ δὲ πᾶσις αὐτὴ. Chrysost. in Acta Apost. Cap. xv. Hom. 33. Vol. viii. p. 613.

Μη γὰρ ἀπεχίσμεθα τῆς ἐκκλησίας; μη γὰρ αἰρεσιάρχας ἔχομεν; μη γὰρ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων καλεμέδαι; μη γὰρ προηγμενῶν ἡμῶν τίς ἐστίν, ὥσπερ τῷ μὲν Μαρκίῳ, τῷ δὲ Μανιχαίῳ, τῷ δὲ Ἀρίῳ, τῷ δὲ ἄλλος τίς αἵρεσιν ἀρχηγῶ. Ibid. p. 661.

It

It has been sufficiently observed with what respect Justin Martyr treats the ancient unitarians, evidently shewing that in his time his own doctrine stood in need of an *apology*. There are two passages in this writer, in which he speaks of *heretics*, with great indignation, as “not christians, but as persons whose tenets were absurd, impious, and blasphemous, with whom christians held no communion;” but in both the passages he evidently had a view to the *Gnostics only*, denominated from the name of their teachers. He particularly mentions the “Marcionites, the Valentinians, the Basilideans, and the Saturnianians.” He says “they blasphemed the maker of the world, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” that “they denied the resurrection, and maintained that after death the soul went immediately to heaven*.” “Do not,” says he, “suppose these

* Εἰσιν οὖν καὶ ἐγένοντο, ὡ φίλοι ἀνδρες, πολλοί, οἱ ἀθεοὶ καὶ βλασφημία λεγέειν καὶ πράττειν ἐδιδάξαντες, ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ προσελθόντες· καὶ εἰσιν ὑφ’ ἡμῶν ἀπο τῆς προσωποποιίας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐξ ὑπὲρ ἑκάστης διδασχῆς καὶ γνώμης ᾠξάτο· (ἄλλοι γὰρ κατ’ ἄλλον τρόπον βλασφημοῦν τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν ὧν, καὶ τῶν ὑφ’ αὐτοῦ προφητευόμενον ἐλευσεσθαι Χριστόν, καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἀβραάμ, καὶ Ἰσαάκ, καὶ Ἰακώβ, διδάσκειν· ὡς εἶναι κοινωτέμους, οἱ γὰρ ἰσοῦντες ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀσέβεις, καὶ ἀδίκους καὶ ἀνομους αὐτοὺς ὑπαρχόντας καὶ αὐτὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν σέβειν, ὀνόματι μόνον ὁμολογεῖν· καὶ Χριστιανὸς εἶναι λέγουσιν, ἐν τρισὶν, οἱ ἐν τοῖς ἑθνεσὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγράφουσι τοῖς χειροποιήτοις, καὶ ἀνθρώποις καὶ ἀθεοῖς τιλεταῖς κοινονοῦσιν) καὶ εἰσιν αὐτῶν οἱ μὲν τῖπες καλεσμένοι Μαρκιωνοὶ, οἱ δὲ Οὐαλεντινιανοὶ, οἱ δὲ Βασιλιδεαροὶ, οἱ δὲ Σατορπιλιανοὶ, καὶ ἄλλοι ἄλλῳ ὀνόματι, ἀπο τοῦ ἀρχηγέτε

της

“ these to be christians.” Had he considered the *unitarians*, with whom he appears to have been well acquainted, as heretics, would he not have mentioned or alluded to their tenets also in those passages, in which he speaks, and pretty largely of the Christian heretics in general? It is impossible, I should think, to read those passages, as they stand in the original, introduced as a fulfilment of our Saviour’s prophecy, that there should be false Christs, and false prophets, who should deceive many, and not be satisfied that (like the apostle John) Justin Martyr had no idea of there being any *heretics* in the christian church, in his time, besides the Gnostics*.

How little is it that Irenæus says of the Ebionites, and with how little severity, in his large treatise concerning heresy. It is not one four hundredth part of the whole, while all the rest is

της γνώμης εκαστος ονομαζομενός, &c. Dialog. Edit. Thirlby, p. 208.

Πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῶν, καὶ τῶν καθάρων καὶ εὐσεβῶν οὐτῶν Χριστιανῶν γνώμης τετο μὴ γινώσκουσιν, ὅτι τὰς γὰρ λεγομένους μὲν Χριστιανούς, οὐκ αὖτε ἀδελφούς, καὶ ἀσεβεῖς αἰρεσιώτας, οὐ κατὰ πάντα βλασφημία, καὶ ἀδία, καὶ ἀρετὰ διδάσκουσιν ἐδήλωσάν τε. — Εἰ γὰρ καὶ συνέβαλετε ὑμεῖς τισὶ λεγομένοις Χριστιανοῖς, καὶ τετο μὴ ομολογῶσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ βλασφημῶν τολμασίῃ τὸν θεὸν Ἀβραάμ, καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἰσαάκ, καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἰακώβ, οἱ καὶ λεγέσθαι μὴ εἶναι τέκνων ἀνασασιν, ἀλλὰ αὐτῶ ἀποθνήσκουσιν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι εἰς τὸν ὕψιστον, μὴ υπολαβῆτε αὐτοὺς Χριστιανούς. Ibid. p 311.

* See Dialogue, Edit. Thirlby, p. 208, pars secunda, p. 311.

employed on the different branches of Gnosticism. The harshest epithet that he applies to them is that of *vani*, which considering the manner of the ancients, is certainly very moderate. *Vani autem et Ebionæi* *. He says, indeed †, that "God will judge them," and "how can they be saved if it be not God that worked out their salvation upon earth." But this is no sentence of damnation passed upon them in particular, for holding their doctrine, but an argument used by him to refute them; and is the same as if he had said, Mankind in general could not be saved, if Christ had not been God as well as man.

There is no instance, I believe, of any person having been excommunicated for being an unitarian before Theodotus, by Victor bishop of Rome, the same that excommunicated all the eastern churches, because they would not celebrate Easter on the day that he prescribed. Whereas had the universal church been trinitarian from the beginning, would not the first unitarians, the first broachers of a doctrine so exceedingly offensive to them, as, in all ages, it has ever been, have experienced their utmost indignation, and have been expelled from all christian societies with horror.

What makes it more particularly evident, that the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ was not thought deserving of excommunication in early times, is, that though the Ebionites were *anathematized*, as Jerom says; or excommuni-

* Lib. 5. Cap. i. p. 394. † Lib. 4. Cap. lix. p. 358.

cated, it was not on account of their denying the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, but *only* on account of their rigid observance of the Mosaic law *. Had you, Sir, been appointed to draw up a form of excommunication for Socinus, would you have confined your charge of heresy to his refusing to baptize infants, or his maintaining the unlawfulness of bearing arms? The principal article would certainly have been his believing, with the Ebionites, that Christ was nothing more than a man.

Such a doctrine as that of the simple humanity of Christ, in a church universally trinitarian, must necessarily have given greater alarm, and have roused the orthodox to exert more vigorous measures than the same doctrine could do, in the time of Calvin, when it was far from being novel; and yet he, though exposed to persecution himself, thought it to be a crime for which burning alive was no more than an adequate punishment; and almost all the Christian world justified his using that rigour, with respect to Servetus. Now, since the minds of men are in all ages similarly affected in similar circumstances, we may conclude, that the unitarian doctrine, which was treated with so much respect, when it was first mentioned, was in

* Si hoc verum est, in Cherenti et Hebionis hæresim dilabimur, qui, credentes in Christo, propter hoc *solum* a patribus anathematizati sunt, quod legis cæremonias Christi evangelio miscuerunt, et sic nova confessi sunt ut ve terra non amitterent.

HIERONYMUS AUGUSTINO, Ep. 89. Vol. 1. p. 634.

a very

a very different predicament then, from what it was at the time of the reformation. The difference of *majority* and *minority*, and nothing else, can account for this difference of treatment.

You will say, if the great majority of Christians in early times, were unitarians, why did not they excommunicate the innovating trinitarians. I answer, that the doctrine of the trinity was not, in its origin; such as could give much alarm, as I have explained in my *Reply to the Monthly Reviewers*, p. 11; and before it became very formidable, there was a great majority of the learned, and philosophizing clergy on its side. However, that it did give very great alarm, as it began to unfold itself, I have brought undeniable evidence.

What words, in any language, can express more alarm, or dislike, than *expavescere*, and *scandalizare*, by which Tertullian describes their feelings on this subject; and Origen has some equally strong in Greek, as *ταρασσειν*, &c. Had the unitarians in those times been *writers*, we should probably have heard more of their complaints. At present, we know nothing of them besides what we are able to collect concerning them from their adversaries, who thought it necessary to make frequent apologies to them.

On the other hand, there is indisputable evidence, that the unitarian doctrine, and even in its most obnoxious form, existed in the very time of the apostles. The Jewish christians in general, not only thought that Christ was a *mere man*, but even that

he was the son of Joseph ; and the *gradation* that you speak of, from the doctrine of the Ebionites, in the time of St. John to that of Theodotus, in the time of Victor, has no existence but in your own single imagination. And yet these unitarians were respected, and not expelled from christian societies, by the orthodox of that age. Explain this fact, in consistence with their not being the majority of christians, if you can.

At this day, as the unitarian doctrine happily gains ground among christians, the horror with which it has been considered is manifestly very much abated. Your treatment of me, and of all who hold the same opinion, is rather extraordinary, considering the times in which we live ; but it is mild, and moderate, compared with the usual treatment of the same doctrine, even in this tolerant country an hundred, or even fifty years ago.

At the time of the revolution, it was made *blasphemy* by act of parliament, openly to avow what I now openly defend, and was punishable with confiscation of goods and imprisonment for life, if persisted in ; and the law still remains unrepealed. But it is seen to be so arbitrary and unjust (as directed against those who conscientiously believe in one God only, without acknowledging three persons to be that one God) that no one dares to put it in execution ; and the state, I am confident, only waits for that application, which I trust will be made, to relieve them, and to wipe off such a disgrace from our statutes.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R IV.

Of the inference that may be drawn from the passage of Athanasius, concerning the opinion of the early Jewish Christians relating to Christ.

DEAR SIR,

AS one argument that the primitive church of Jerusalem was properly unitarian, maintaining the simple humanity of Christ, I observed, that "Athanasius himself was so far from denying it, that he endeavoured to account for it, by saying that all the Jews were so firmly persuaded that their Messiah was to be nothing more than a man like themselves, that the apostles were obliged to use great caution in divulging the doctrine of the proper divinity of Christ."

This I maintain to be a short, but true state of the case. Athanasius both expressly allowed that the Jewish christians were at first of the opinion that Christ was no more than a man, and he accounts for the apostles conniving at it, without saying how long that prudent connivance continued. In my *Appendix* you will find a somewhat fuller state of the argument. I shall now distinctly consider all that you have advanced to invalidate the inference that I have made from this remarkable passage. I shall afterwards shew that it was not

D 3

Athanasius

Athanasius only, but Chrysostom also ; and as he says, the *antients, and the most distinguished fathers of the church*, who gave the same representation of the state of things in the apostolical age.

You say, p. 22. that Athanasius is here speaking of the unbelieving Jews. The expression is *οἱ τότε Ἰουδαῖοι*, the *Jews of that age* ; which includes both the believing and unbelieving Jews. Had he been speaking of the Jews of his own time, it would, I own, have been probable that he meant the unbelieving Jews ; but speaking, as he does, of the Jews at the very first promulgation of christianity among them, it is most natural to suppose that he meant *all* the Jews. Paul, long after his conversion to christianity, called himself a Jew. However, it will be sufficiently evident from the whole tenor of the passage, that he must have meant the believing Jews principally, and in some respects the believing Jews only, exclusive of the unbelieving ones. And in this construction of the passage I am by no means singular, but have the sanction of trinitarians themselves.

But admitting that the Jews here meant were unbelieving Jews, they were such as the apostles wished to convert to christianity, and many of them soon became christians. How the apostles conducted themselves with respect to these men, first unbelieving, and then believing Jews, Athanasius thus informs us. Our readers may judge of the fidelity of the translation by consulting the
original

original in the margin; and as I only abridged the passage before, I shall now give a larger portion of it at full length, for the whole is much too large to transcribe*. “Will they affirm that the apostles held the doctrine of Arius, because they say that Christ was a man of Nazareth, and suffered on the cross? Or because they used these words were the apostles of opinion that Christ was only a man, and nothing else? By no means: this is not to be imagined. But this they did as *wise master builders, and stewards of the mysteries of God*; and they had this specious pretence for it. For the Jews of that

* Οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἀβόλητον, ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀποστόλοι τὰ Ἀρεῖα ἐροῦν. ἀνθρώπον γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρετ, καὶ παῖδον τὸν Χριστὸν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν, ἐκείνων τοῖνυν τοιαύτῃ φανταζομένων, ὅρ' ἐπειδὴ τοῖς ῥήμασι τούτοις ἐχρησάτο, μόνον ἀνθρώπον ᾔδεισαν τὸν Χριστὸν οἱ Ἀποστολοι, καὶ πλεον ἐδίδαν; ἢ γένοιτο· ἐκ εἰς οὐδὲ εἰς νοῦν ποτε τὸτο λαβεῖν· ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸτο ὡς ἀρχιτεκτονόες σωφοί, καὶ οἰκονομοὶ μυστηρίων θεοῦ πεποίηκασιν. καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν ἐχουσιν εὐλογεῖν· ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οἱ τότε Ἰεδαῖοι πλανηθεῖς, καὶ πλανησάντες Ἕλληνας, ἐνομιζόν τὸν Χριστὸν, ψιλὸν ἀνθρώπον, μόνον ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ ἐρχέσθαι, καὶ ὑμοιωπῆτα τῶν ἐκ τοῦ Δαβὶδ ἄλλων γενομένων τέκνων· οὐτε δὲ θεὸν αὐτὸν, οὐδὲ ὅτι λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο ἐπίστευον. τούτου ἐνέκα, μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς συνέσεως οἱ μακαριοὶ ἀπόστολοι τὰ ἀνθρώπινα τῆ σωτηρίας ἐξηγουμένο πρῶτον τοῖς Ἰεδαίοις, ἵνα ὅλως πείσαντες αὐτοὺς, ἐκ τῶν φαινομένων καὶ γενομένων σημείων, ἐληλυθῆναι τὸν Χριστὸν, λοιπὸν καὶ εἰς τὰ περὶ τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ πείσιν αὐτοὺς ἀναγαγῶσιν, δεικνύοντες ὅτι τὰ γενομένα ἔργα ἐκ εἰς ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλὰ θεοῦ. ἀμείλει Πέτρος ὁ λεγὼν ἀνδρὰ παῖδον τὸν Χριστὸν, εὐθύς εὐηπλὴν κῆρος ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς εἶναι. &c. &c. De Sententia Dionysii, Opera. vol. i. p. 553, 554.

D 4

“ age,

“ age, being deceived themselves, and having
 “ deceived the Gentiles, thought that Christ was a
 “ mere man, only that he came of the seed of
 “ David, resembling other descendants of David,
 “ and did not believe either that he was God, or
 “ that the word was made flesh. On this account
 “ the blessed apostles, with *great prudence*, in the
 “ first place, taught what related to the humanity
 “ of our Saviour to the Jews; that having fully
 “ persuaded them, from his miraculous works,
 “ that Christ was come, they might afterwards
 “ bring them to the belief of his divinity, shewing
 “ that his works were not those of a man, but of
 “ God. For example, Peter having said that
 “ Christ was a man who had suffered, immediately
 “ added, *he is the prince of life*. In the gospel he
 “ confesses, ‘Thou art the Christ, the son of the
 “ living God; and in his epistle he calls him the
 “ *bishop of Souls*.’”

Here, I think, are sufficient marks of great *cau-*
tion, and of the apostles leading their converts to the
 knowledge of the divinity of Christ, by very distant
 and uncertain *inferences* indeed, such as Jews, so
 previously persuaded as he represents them to have
 been, of the simple humanity of their Messiah,
 would not very readily understand.

Now if this caution was requisite in the first in-
 stance, and with respect to the first converts that the
 apostles made, it was equally requisite with respect
 to the rest, at least for the sake of others who were
 not

not yet converted; unless the first should have been enjoined secrecy on that head. For whenever it had been known that the apostles were preaching not such a Messiah as they expected, viz. *a man like themselves*, but *the eternal God*, the difference was so great, that a general alarm must have been spread, and the conversion of the rest of the Jews (to a doctrine which must have appeared so highly improbable to them) must have been impeded. We may therefore presume, that the apostles must have connived at this state of ignorance, concerning the divinity of Christ, in their Jewish converts, till there was little hope of making any farther converts among the Jews, and till the gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles.

Indeed, this must have been the case, according to Athanasius's own account. For he says, that these Jews, being in an error themselves, led the Gentiles into the same error. For your notion, that by *Gentiles*, our author here meant *profelytes of the gate*, is altogether arbitrary and improbable. Nay, the very existence of these profelytes of the gate, you must know has been questioned, and I think fully disproved by Dr. Lardner and others. Besides, it is not to be supposed, that the doctrine of a Messiah could have been very interesting to any, besides native Jews, or at the most, those that were complete profelytes; whereas to the Gentile christians it was a matter of the greatest moment. By these Gentiles, therefore, I conclude that Athanasius must have meant *christian Gentiles*, and consequently

quently that by the Jews, who led them into that mistake, he meant the believing, and not the unbelieving Jews. The learned Beausobre, a trinitarian, and therefore an unexceptionable judge in this case, quoting this very passage, does not hesitate to pronounce that they were believing Jews, who were intended by the writer. “Ces Juifs,” he says, “ne sont pas les Juifs incredules, mais ceux qui faisoient profession du christianisme*.”

What I have respect to in this passage, is the obvious general tenor and spirit of it, and not particular words or phrases; or, I might observe, that the *verbs* in that part of the passage, which mentions *Christ being come of the seed of David*, and the *word being made flesh*, are not in the *future tense*, and therefore do not naturally refer to the Messiah in general, who *was to come*, but to a person who *was actually come*, that is, to Jesus Christ in particular. The Latin translator of Athanasius, a Catholic, and certainly no unitarian, had so little suspicion of any other meaning, that he renders *τον Χριστον* in this place by *Jesum*; so that I am far from being singular, or particularly biassed by my own opinions, in my construction of this passage.

Supposing, however, not only the proselytes of the gate, but the whole body of the Gentiles (little as they were concerned in the question) to have been previously taught by the Jews that their Me-

* Histoire de Manicheisme, vol. ii. p. 517.

siah,

fish, whenever he should come, would be nothing more than a man; if this was an opinion that they were as fully persuaded of as Athanasius represents the Jews, their teachers, to have been, the same caution must have been as necessary with respect to them, as with respect to the Jews themselves, and for the same reason.

Athanasius must, therefore, be understood to say, that the Jewish converts, while (through the caution of the apostles) they were ignorant of the divinity of Christ, preached the gospel *in that state* to the Gentiles. And as he speaks of Gentiles *in general*, and without any respect to *time*, and also of their being actually brought over to that belief, it is impossible not to understand him of this caution being continued till the gospel had been fully preached to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Besides, one of the instances that Athanasius here gives of the preaching of the simple humanity of Christ, is taken from the discourse of the apostle Paul at Athens, which was about the year 53, after Christ; and indeed at this time the gospel had not been preached to any great extent among the Gentiles. For it was on this very journey that this apostle first preached the gospel in Macedonia and Greece.

If, according to Athanasius, the apostolical reserve with respect to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ continued till this time (and he says nothing concerning the termination of it) we may presume that this great doctrine, supposing it to have been known

to

to the apostles, had not been publicly taught by them; till very near the time of their dispersion and death; and then I think it must have come too late even from them. For it appears from the book of Acts, that their mere *authority* was not sufficient to overbear the prejudices of their countrymen. At least, such an extraordinary communication of a doctrine of which they had no conception, must have occasioned such an alarm, and consternation, as we must have found some traces of in the history of the Acts of the apostles. It could not have been received without hesitation and debate.

If we can suppose that the apostles some time before their death, did communicate this great and unexpected doctrine, the effects of such communication must have been very transient. For presently after the death of the apostles, we find all the Jewish Christians distinguished by the name of *Nazarenes*, or *Ebionites*, and no trace of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ among them. If you can produce any evidence to the contrary, I hope you will do it. It certainly behoves you to do it if you can; for without this, you will hardly make it appear probable that the apostles ever communicated such a doctrine at all.

You say, p. 25, " With what readiness the
 " apostles led their catechumens on from the sim-
 " plest principles to the highest mysteries; of this
 " consummate ability of the apostles, in the capa-
 " city of teachers, Athanasius speaks with due
 " com-

“ commendation. Their *caution* he never men-
 “ tions. On the contrary, the rapid progress of
 “ their instruction, how they passed at once from
 “ the detail of our Lord’s life on earth, to the
 “ mystery of his Godhead, is one principal branch
 “ of his encomium. I wish that Dr. Priestley had
 “ produced the passage, in which he thinks the apos-
 “ tles are taxed with caution.”

I now have produced the passage, and have pointed out a *word*, viz. *συστης*, which, in the connexion in which it stands, can bear no other sense than *caution*, and great caution (*μετα πολλης συστησεως*) and I have likewise shewn from the whole tenor of the discourse, that Athanasius could have intended nothing else than to describe their prudence, or extreme caution, and to account for it. He evidently does not represent them as deferring the communication of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, on account of its being more conveniently taught afterwards, as part of a system of faith; but only lest it should have given offence to the Jews. If this *skill* or *prudence*, in these circumstances, be not the same thing with *caution*, I do not know what is meant by *caution*.

On the other hand, I find no trace of *rapidity* in this account of the apostles conduct. All that approaches to it is that, immediately after any mention of the humanity of Christ (which he speaks of as necessary on account of the Jewish prejudices) he says the apostles subjoin some expression which might have

have led their hearers to the knowledge of his divinity ; but the instances he produces are such as plainly confute any pretensions to their being a *distinct* and *full* declaration of that doctrine.

The first instance he gives us, is from the speech of Peter to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, in which he says, Acts ii. 22. "*Ye men of Israel; hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.*" In this Athanasius acknowledges that Peter preached the proper humanity of Christ, but says that *immediately* afterwards (referring to his discourse on the cure of the lame man in the temple) he called him the *prince of life*, Acts iii. 15. *And killed the prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead.*

Had the apostle meant that his audience should have understood him as referring to the divinity of Christ by that expression, his prudence must have lasted but a very short time indeed ; probably not many days. If therefore, his intention was, as Athanasius represents it, to preach the doctrine of the humanity of Christ *in the first place*, and not to divulge the doctrine of his divinity till they were *firmly persuaded of his Messiahship*, he could not mean to allude to his divinity in this speech, which was addressed not to the believing, but to the unbelieving Jews. At least he could only have thought of doing it in such a manner, as that his hearers

hearers might afterwards *infer* the doctrine from it. And it must have required great ingenuity, and even a strong prepossession in favour of the divinity of Christ (the reverse of which this writer acknowledges) to imagine that this expression of *prince of life*, which so easily admits of another interpretation, had any such reference. Moreover, in all the instances which Athanasius produces concerning the conduct of the apostles in this respect, from the book of Acts, he does not pretend to find one in which the divinity of Christ is *distinctly* preached, though he quotes four passages in which his humanity is plainly spoken of.

When all these things are considered, viz. that Athanasius acknowledged that it required great caution in the apostles to divulge the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and that the gospel was preached with success among the Gentiles, while the Jews were ignorant of it; it can hardly be doubted but that he must himself have considered the Christian church in general as unitarian, in the time of the apostles, at least till near the time of their dispersion and death*.

* According to Athanasius, the Jews were to be well grounded in the belief of Jesus being the Christ, before they could be taught the doctrine of his divinity. Now if we look into the book of Acts, we shall clearly see that they had not got beyond the first lesson in the apostolic age; the great burden of the preaching of the apostles being to persuade the Jews that *Jesus was the Christ*. That he was likewise *God*, they evidently left to their successors; who, indeed, did it most effectually, though it required a long course of time to do it.

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With respect to Athanasius's declared opinion on this subject, you say, p. 21. " Now in this " piece upon the orthodoxy of Dionysius, Atha- " nsius no where, I confess, denies that the " primitive church of Jerusalem was unitarian ; " nor, on the other hand, do I recollect that Dr. " Priestley hath asserted it in any part of his " History of Electricity." Whether in my History of Electricity, or in this piece of Athanasius, in which he gives a large account of the conduct of the apostles with respect to their preaching the divinity of Christ, an account of the actual *effect* of such preaching might be more naturally expected, I leave to our readers. I should have thought, that if Athanasius *could* have added, that, notwithstanding their caution in preaching this extraordinary doctrine, against which he acknowledges the Jews had the strongest prejudices, they nevertheless, did preach it with effect, and that it was the general belief of the Jewish christians in their time, he would not have thought it at all foreign to his purpose. It would certainly have favoured his great object in writing this piece, viz. the vindication of Dionysius, in using a like caution with respect to the Sabellians ; to have added, that this prudence, or caution, was not, in either of the two cases, finally detrimental to the cause of truth. I therefore consider the silence of Athanasius on this head, as a negative argument of some weight ; and upon the whole I think I have made it appear that Athanasius must have supposed that both the Jewish and Gentile churches were unitarian

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in the time of the apostles, at least he enables us to infer that it must have been so; and this is quite sufficient for my argument.

That Athanasius, however, should actually consider the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, as for some time unknown to the generality of christians, in the age of the apostles, will be thought the less extraordinary, when it is observed, that, like Tertullian, he acknowledged the unitarian doctrine to be very prevalent among the lower class of people in his own time. He calls them the *οι πολλοι*, *the many*, and describes them as persons of "low understanding. Things that are sublime and "difficult," he says, "are not to be apprehended, except by faith, and ignorant people must "fall if they cannot be persuaded to rest in faith, "and avoid curious questions*."

There can be no doubt, therefore, but that the doctrine of the trinity was a long time very unpopular with the common people among christians; and this is a fact that cannot be satisfactorily accounted for, but on the supposition that the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ was that

* *Λυπεῖ δὲ καὶ νῦν τὴν ἀντεχομένην τῆς ἁγίας πίστεως, ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτῶν βλασφημιῶν βλαπτέσα τὴν πολλοὺς· μαλιστα τὴν πλανώμενην περὶ τῆς συνέσεως. Τα γὰρ μεγάλα καὶ δύσκαταληπτά τῶν πραγμάτων πίσει τῇ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν λαμβανεται. Ὅθεν οἱ περὶ τὴν γνώσιν ἀδυνάτεντες ἀποπίπτουσιν, εἰ μὴ παιδείῃν ἐμμενῇν τῇ πίσει, καὶ τὰς περίεργας ζητήσεις ἐκτρέψωται. De incarnatione verbi contra Paulum Samosatensem, Opera, vol. i. p. 591.*

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which

which had been handed down to them by tradition from the apostles. It was not the doctrine of Arius that Athanasius is here complaining of, but that of Paulus Samosatensis, who was a proper unitarian, believing that Christ had no existence before he was born of his mother Mary. The great popularity of Photinus, at and after this time, shews with what difficulty the common people were brought off from this doctrine; and also the confession of Austin, that he was of that opinion, till he became acquainted with the writings of Plato.

It is not from Athanasius alone that we are informed of this cautious proceeding of the apostles, in divulging the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. Chrysostom ascribes the same caution both to Christ himself, and the apostles. "One reason," he says, "why Christ said so little of his own divinity, was on account of the weakness of his auditors. Whenever he spake of himself as any thing more than man, they were tumultuous, and offended; but when he spake with humility, and as a man, they ran to him, and received his words*." Of this he gives many examples. "Our Saviour," he says, "never taught his own divinity in express words, but only by actions, leaving the fuller explication

* Εἰ ποτε τι τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως εἶπε πλεον, εὖδο-
 ρύοντο, καὶ ἐσκάνδαλιζοντο· εἰ δὲ τι ποτὲ ταπεινόν, καὶ
 ἀνθρωπινόν, προσετρεχόν, καὶ τοῦ λόγον εἰδέχοντο. Homil.
 32. vol. i. p. 409.

“ of it to his disciples. If”, says he, “ they
 “ (meaning the Jews) were so much offended at
 “ the addition of another law to their former;
 “ much more must they have been with the doc-
 “ trine of his divinity*.”

Chrysostom ascribes the same caution to the apostles on this subject. He says that they concealed the doctrine of the miraculous conception, on account of the incredulity of the Jews with respect to it; and that when they began to preach the gospel, they insisted chiefly on the resurrection of Christ†. With respect to the former (and the same may, no doubt, be applied to the latter) he says he did not give “ his own opinion only, but that
 “ which came by tradition from the fathers, and
 “ eminent men. He therefore would not have
 “ his hearers to be alarmed, or think his account
 “ of it extraordinary ‡.”

Thus, he says, that “ it was not to give offence
 “ to the Jews, that Peter, in his first speech to the
 “ them, did not say that *Christ* did the wonderful

* Διά δε τούτο καὶ περὶ τῆς θεότητος τῆς αὐτοῦ πάντα χα-
 φαίνεται σαφῶς παιδεύων. Εἰ γὰρ ἡ τε νόμιμ προσθήκη τοσούτον
 αὐτὸς ἐδοκίμει, πόλλω μᾶλλον τὸ θεῖον αὐτὸν ἀποφαινέιν. In
 caput Mat. v. Hom. 16. vol. vii. p. 154.

† Matt. Cap. 1. Hom. 3. vol. vii. p. 20.

‡ Ἀλλὰ μὴ θορυβείσθαι πρὸς τὸ παραδόξον τε λεγόμενόν.
 Ἄ δε γὰρ ἔμος ὁ λόγος ἀλλὰ πατέρα καὶ ἡμετέρων θαύμασάν τε
 ἐπίσημῶν ἀνδρῶν. In cap. Matt. i. Hom. 3. vol. vii. p. 20.

“ works of which he spake, but that *God* did them
 “ by him; that by speaking more modestly he
 “ might conciliate them to himself*. The same
 caution he attributes to him, in “ not saying
 “ that *Christ*, but that *God* spake by the mouth of
 “ his holy prophets, that by these means he
 “ might bring them gradually to the faith †.”

I cannot help observing how extremely improbable is this account of the conduct of the apostles, given by Athanasius, Chrysostom, and other orthodox fathers of the church, considering what we know of the character and the instructions of the apostles. They were plain men, and little qualified to act the cautious part here ascribed to them. And their instructions certainly were to teach all that they knew, even what their master communicated to them in the greatest privacy. Whereas, upon this scheme, they must have suffered numbers to die in the ignorance of the most important truth in the gospel, lest, by divulging it too soon, the conversion of others should have been prevented. The case evidently was that these Fathers did not know how to account for the great prevalence of the unitarian doctrine, among the Gentiles as well as the Jews, in the early ages of christianity,

* ΟΥΚ ΕΤΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΟΤΙ ΑΥΤΘ, ΑΛΛ ΟΤΙ ΔΙ ΑΥΤΕ Ο ΘΕΟΣ, ΙΝΑ ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΤΩ ΜΕΤΡΙΑΖΕΙΝ ΦΕΛΚΥΣΗΤΑΙ. In Acta Apostolorum cap. ii. Hom. 6. vol. viii. p. 491.

† ΟΥ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΩΝ ΕΙΠΕΝ Ο ΧΡΙΣΘ, ΑΛΛ' ΩΝ ΕΛΑΛΗΣΕΝ Ο ΘΕΘ, ΕΤΙ ΤΩ ΣΥΣΚΙΑΖΕΙΝ ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΑΥΤΕΣ ΕΠΑΓΟΜΕΝΘ ΕΙΣ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ ΗΡΕΜΑ. In acta Apostolorum Hom. 9. vol. viii. p. 511.

but

but upon such an hypothesis as this. Let their successors do better, if they can.

This observation on the character and instructions of the apostles, must make all such accounts of their conduct absolutely incredible, with respect to every doctrine of *consequence*, on which they could not but lay proportionable stress. But it may perhaps enable us to account for the ignorance of the Jews, and other early christians, with respect to matters of little or no consequence, on which the apostles did not lay any stress, and for which reason they might say little or nothing about them, as for instance with respect to the miraculous conception.

In our Saviour's life time he certainly passed for the son of Joseph with the Jews in general. The first disciples would naturally adopt the same opinion; and it does not appear that the apostles thought it a matter of consequence enough to set them right with respect to it. For there is no reference whatever to the miraculous conception either in the book of Acts, or in any of the epistles. Indeed that doctrine has never been thought to be of any importance *in itself*; Christ being as properly a *man* on one supposition as on the other. It is therefore only of importance with respect to the credit of Matthew and Luke, as historians, and that not with respect to what they write from their *own knowledge*, but only as to what they collected from others. Whereas, if Christ was not a

mere man, but either truly *God*, or the *maker of the world under God*, it could not but have appeared to be a matter of the greatest consequence in the scheme of christianity itself ; and the apostles would certainly have taken some opportunity of inculcating it, with an energy suited to its importance. We may therefore easily account for the general prevalence of the opinion of Christ being the son of Joseph, though it was false ; but it is absolutely impossible to account for the general prevalence of the doctrine of the mere humanity of Christ, on the supposition of his being either God, or the maker of the world under God, and consequently of his being known to be so by the apostles. I may perhaps take some future opportunity of making some farther observations on the subject of the *miraculous conception* ; and in the mean time the *Monthly Reviewer* may be indulging his conjectures, and preparing his exclamations ; for which our readers will likewise be pretty well prepared.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R V.

An argument for the late origin of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, from the difficulty of tracing the time in which it was first divulged.

DEAR SIR,

I CANNOT dismiss this subject of the strong prejudices of the Jews in general in favour of their Messiah being merely a man (thus explicitly acknowledged by Athanasius, Chrysostom, and others, who say, that *on this account* the apostles did not preach the doctrine of the divinity of Christ at first, but only after the people were satisfied with respect to his Messiahship) without requesting your opinion with respect to the *time* when this great secret of Christ not being merely a man, but the eternal God himself, or the maker of heaven and earth under God, was communicated, first to the apostles themselves, and then by them to the body of christians.

You cannot say that John the Baptist preached any such doctrine; and when the apostles first attached themselves to Jesus, it is evident they only considered him as being such a Messiah as the rest of the Jews expected, viz. a man, and a king. When Nathaniel was introduced to him it was evidently in that light, John i. 45. *Philip findeth*

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Nathaniel,

Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. He had then, we may suppose, no knowledge even of the miraculous conception.

Now, as you say, p. 24. that "Christ was so much more than man, that his being found in fashion as a man was really the most extraordinary part of his history and character;" and at first the apostles, you must allow, were wholly ignorant of this; there must have been a time, within the compass of the evangelical history, when this most extraordinary part of his character was communicated to them. Now what period in the gospel history can you pitch upon, in which you can suppose that this great discovery was made to them? What traces do you find of it?

That Jesus was even the *Messiah* was divulged with the greatest caution, both to the apostles, and to the body of the Jews. For a long time our Lord said nothing explicit on this subject, but left his disciples, as well as the Jews at large, to judge of him from what they saw. In this manner only he replied to the messengers that John the Baptist sent to him.

If the High-priest expressed his horror, by rending his cloaths, on Jesus avowing himself to be the Messiah, what would he have done if he had heard, or suspected, that he had made any higher pretensions?

tensions? And if he had made them, they must have transpired. When the people in general saw his miraculous works, they only wondered that God should have given so much power to a man, Matt. ix. 8. *When the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given such power unto men;* and yet this was on the occasion of his pronouncing the cure of a paralytic person, by saying, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*, which the Pharisees thought to be a blasphemous presumption.

At the time that Herod heard of him, it was conjectured by some that he was Elias, by others that he was a prophet, and by some that he was John risen from the dead; but none of them imagined that he was either the most high God himself, or the maker of the world under God. It was not so much as supposed by any person that Jesus performed his mighty works by any proper power of *his own*; so far were they from suspecting that he was the God who had spoken to them by Moses, as you now suppose him to have been.

If he was known to be a God at all before his death, it could only have been revealed to his disciples, perhaps the apostles, or only his chief confidants among them, Peter, James, and John, suppose on the mount of transfiguration, though nothing is said concerning it in the history of that transaction. Certainly what they saw in the garden of Gethsemane could not have led them to suspect
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any such thing. But if it had ever been known to Peter, can we suppose he could have denied him as he did? Besides, as our Lord told them there were many things which he could not inform them of before his death, and that they should know afterwards; this was a thing so very wonderful and unsuspected, that if any articles of information were kept from them at that time, *this* must certainly have been one.

If you suppose that Thomas was acquainted with this most extraordinary part of his master's character, which led him to cry, *My Lord and my God*, when he was convinced of his resurrection, as he was not one of the *three*, who had been entrusted with any secrets, it must have been known to all the twelve, and to Judas Iscariot among the rest. And suppose him to have known, and to have believed that Jesus was his God and maker, was it possible for him, or for any man, to have formed a deliberate purpose to betray him (Peter, you may say, was taken by surprize, and was in personal danger) or if he had only heard of the pretension, and had not believed it, would he not have made some advantages of that imposition, and have made the discovery of this, as well as of every thing else that he knew to his prejudice?

If you suppose that the divinity of Christ was unknown to the apostles till the day of Pentecost; besides losing the benefit of several of your arguments for this great doctrine, which you now
carefully

carefully collect from the four evangelists, we have no account of any such discovery having been made at that time, or at any subsequent one. And of other articles of illumination, of much less consequence than this, we have distinct information, and also of the manner in which they impressed them. This is particularly the case with respect to the extension of the blessings of the gospel to uncircumcised Gentiles. But what was this article, to the knowledge of their master being the most high God ?

If the doctrine of the divinity of Christ had been actually preached by the apostles, and the Jewish converts in general had adopted it, it could not but have been well known to the unbelieving Jews ; and would they, who were at that time, and have been ever since, so exceedingly zealous with respect to the doctrine of the divine unity, not have taken the alarm, and have urged this objection to christianity, as teaching the belief of more Gods than one in the apostolic age ; and yet no trace of any thing of this nature can be perceived in the whole history of the book of Acts, or any where else in the New Testament. As soon as ever the Jews had any pretence for it, we find them sufficiently quick and vehement in urging this their great objection to christianity. To answer the charge of holding *two*, or *three Gods*, is a very considerable article in the writings of several of the ancient christian fathers. Why then do we find nothing of this kind in the age of the apostles ? The only answer

answer is, that there then was no occasion for it, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ not having then been started*.

Consider, Sir, the charge that was advanced against Peter and John at the first promulgation of the gospel. You will find it amounts to nothing but their being disturbers of the people, by preaching in the name of Jesus. What was the accusation against Stephen (Acts vi. 13.) but his *speaking blasphemous things against the temple and the law*? Accompany the apostle Paul in all his travels, and attend to his discourses with the Jews in their synagogues, and their perpetual and inveterate persecution of him, you will find no trace of their so much as suspecting that he preached a *new divinity*, as the godhead of Christ must have appeared, and always has appeared to them.

In the year 58, Paul tells the elders of the church of Epnesus (Acts xx. 27.) that *he had not failed to declare unto them the whole counsel of God*. We may be confident, therefore, that, if he had any such doctrine to divulge, he must have taught it in the three years that he spent in that city from

* Athanasius strongly expresses this objection, as made by both Jews and Gentiles, to the incarnation of the son of God, though as a thing that was gloried in by Christians. "The Jews," says he, "reproach us for it, the Gentiles laugh at it; but we adore it." *Ἡν Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν διακαλλοῦσιν, Ἕλληες δὲ χλευάζουσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ προσκυνούμεν.* De Incarnatione Verbi, Opera, vol. i. p. 53.

54 to 57 ; and as the unbelieving Jews were well apprized of all his motions, having laid wait for him on this very journey to Jerusalem, they must have been informed of his having taught this doctrine, and would certainly have carried the news of it to Jerusalem, where many of them attended, as well as he, at the ensuing feast of Pentecost. But if we attend Paul thither, where we have a very particular account of all the proceedings against him, for the space of two years, we shall find no trace of any thing of the kind. All their complaints against him fell far short of this.

What was the occasion of the first clamour against him? Was it not, Acts xxi. 28. that *he taught all men every where against the people, and against the law, and against the temple*, and that he had *brought Greeks into it*? Is it not plain that they had no more serious charge against him? Read his speech to the people, his defence before Felix, and again before Agrippa; you will find no trace of his having taught any doctrine so offensive to the Jews as that of the divinity of Christ must have been. Considering the known prejudices, and the inveteracy of the Jews, no reasonable man need desire any clearer proof than this, that neither Paul, nor any of the apostles, had ever taught the doctrine of the divinity of Christ at that time; and this was so near the time of the wars of the Jews, and the dispersion of that people, that there was no opportunity of preaching it with effect afterwards.

Consider

Consider also the conduct of the *Jewish christians*, who had strong prejudices against Paul, as we find in this part of his history; and according to the testimony of all historians, they retained those prejudices as long as they had any name, and after the destruction of Jerusalem, which was not long after the close of the history of the Acts, no trace can be found of their believing any such doctrine as the divinity of Christ. Now, though their enmity to Paul continued, and they never considered his writings as canonical scripture, yet to the very last, their objections to him amounted to nothing more than his being no friend to the law of Moses.

The resemblance between the character of the Ebionites, as given by the early christian fathers, and that of the Jewish christians at the time of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, is very striking. After he had given an account of his conduct, to the more intelligent of them, they were satisfied with it; but they thought there would be great difficulty in satisfying others. "Thou seest, brother," say they to him, Acts xxi. 20. "how many thousands of Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous of the law. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses; saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? The multitudes must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art
" come

" come. Do therefore this, that we say to thee.
 " We have four men who have a vow on them.
 " Them take and purify thyself with them, and
 " be at charges with them, that they may shave
 " their heads, and all may know that those things
 " whereof they were informed concerning thee
 " are nothing, but that thou thyself also walkest
 " orderly and keepest the law." So great a re-
 semblance in some things, viz. their attachment
 to the law, and their prejudices against Paul, can-
 not but lead us to imagine that they were the
 same in other respects also, both being equally
 zealous observers of the law, and equally strangers
 to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. And in
 that age all the Jews were equally zealous for the
 great doctrine of the *unity of God*, and their *pecu-
 liar customs*. Can it be supposed then that they
 would so obstinately retain the one, and so readily
 abandon the other?

These considerations (and much more might
 be added to enforce them) certainly affect the
 credibility of Christ having any nature superior
 to that of man; and when they are sufficiently
 attended to (as I suspect they never have been) must
 shake the Arian hypothesis; but they must be par-
 ticularly embarrassing to those who, like you,
 maintain the perfect equality of the Son to the
 Father.

Considerations of this kind, if they occur to
 him, no person, who thinks at all, can absolutely
 neglect,

neglect, so as to satisfy himself with having no hypothesis on the subject. You certainly find the apostles, as well as the rest of the Jews, without any knowledge of the divinity of Christ, with whom they lived and conversed as a man; and if they ever became acquainted with it, there must have been a *time* when it was either discovered by them, or made known to them; and the effects of the acquisition, or the communication of extraordinary knowledge, are in general proportionably conspicuous.

Had we had no written history of our Saviour's life, or of the preaching of the apostles, or only some very concise one; still so very extraordinary an article as this would hardly have been unknown, or have passed unrecorded; much less when the history is so full and circumstantial as it is.

Had there been any pretence for imagining that the Jews in our Saviour's time had any knowledge of the doctrine of the trinity, and that they expected the second person in it in the character of their Messiah, the question I propose to you would have been needless. But nothing can be more evident than that, whatever you may fancy with respect to more ancient times, every notion of the trinity was obliterated from the minds of the Jews in our Saviour's time. It is, therefore, not only a curious, but a serious and important question, *When was it introduced, and by what steps?* I have answered it on my hypothesis of its being

being an *innovation* and a *corruption* of the christian doctrine; do you the same on your idea of its being an essential part of it.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

Of the personification of the Logos.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING considered all that you have advanced concerning the antiquity of the unitarian doctrine, I proceed to attend to what you observe concerning the *personification of the Logos* by the platonizing christians: for, that many of them did platonize you are far from denying. "If," you say, p. 50. "he hath succeeded no better in the proof of his third assertion, concerning the platonizing christians of the second age, the inventors, as he would have it, of our Lord's divinity; that the divinity which they set up was only of the secondary sort, which was admitted by the Arians, including neither eternity nor any proper necessity of existence; having the mere name of divinity, without any thing of the real form: if the proof of this third assertion should be found to be equally infirm with that

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“ of the other two, his notion of the gradual
 “ progress of opinions from the mere Unitarian
 “ doctrine to the Arian, and from the Arian doc-
 “ trine to the Athanasian faith, must be deemed a
 “ mere dream or fiction in every part.”

In the first place I must set you right with respect to my own idea, which you have totally misconceived, though you have undertaken to refute it, and this strange mistake of yours runs through the whole of your work. Those platonizing christians who personified the Logos were not Arians; for their Logos was an attribute of the Father, and not any thing that was created of nothing, as the Arians held Christ to have been. It is well known, as Beausobre observes, that they were not Arians, but the orthodox, that platonized. Constantine, as I have observed, vol. ii. p. 488. in his oration to the fathers of the council of Nice, speaks in commendation of Plato, as having taught the doctrine of a second God, derived from the supreme God, and subservient to his will.

Among the proofs of the origin of the Son, according to the early orthodox writers, I first quoted a passage in Athenagoras, which you translate somewhat differently from me; but not so as to affect my conclusion from it. For he evidently asserts that the Logos was eternal in God only because God was always λογικόν, *rational*, which entirely excludes proper personification. See Athenagoras, p. 82. Can reason, as it exists
 in

in man, be called a person, merely because man is a *rational* being ?

Besides, this is the only one of all my authorities that you have thought proper to examine ; whereas there are others which you have overlooked so plain and determinate, that it is impossible for you to interpret them otherwise than I have done ; as they evidently imply, that it depended upon the Father's will that the Logos should have a proper personification, and become a Son, with respect to him. The passages which I have quoted from Tertullian and Lactantius, vol. i. p. 28. whose orthodoxy you cannot question, I call upon you particularly to consider.

There is a passage in Tertullian which shews how ready the platonizing Christians were to revert to the idea of an *attribute* of God in their use of the word *Logos*. “ We have said that God made
“ the universe by his *word, reason, and power* ;
“ and it appears that among your philosophers
“ also, the *Logos*, that is, *speech and reason*, was
“ the maker of the universe. For this Zeno sup-
“ posed to be the maker and disposer of all things,
“ that the same is called *fate, and God, and the*
“ *mind of Jupiter, and the necessity of all things* *.”

* Jam ediximus Deum universitatem hanc mundi verbo, et ratione, et virtute molitum. Apud vestros quoque sapientes, λογος, id est sermonem, atque rationem, constat artificem videri universitatis. Hunc enim Zeno determinat facitorem, qui cuncta in dispositione formaverit ; eundem et fatum vocari, et deum, et animum Jovis, et necessitatem omnium rerum. Apologeticus, sect. xxi. p. 19.

The Platonic trinity, at least the second person in it, probably had its origin in personification; and in this the Christians were too ready to follow them, by converting the Logos of St. John into a proper person.

You acknowledge, p. 56. that these writers platonized, and this you say was common to Athenagoras, and them all. "If any thing," you say, p. 56. "be justly reprehensible in the notions of the platonic christians, it is this conceit, which seems to be common to Athenagoras, with them all, and is a key to the meaning of many obscure passages in their writings; that the *external display of the powers* of the son in the business of creation, is the thing intended in the scripture language, under the figure of his *generation*; a conceit which seems to have no certain foundation in holy writ, and no authority in the opinions and the doctrines of the preceding age; and it seems to have betrayed some of those, who were the most wedded to it, into the use of a very improper language; as if a new relation had taken place between the first and the second person, when the creative powers were first exerted."

You add, after apologizing for the conduct of the platonizing fathers, "the conversion of an attribute into a person, whatever Dr. Priestley may imagine, is a notion to which they were entire strangers." I answer that it is not possible, either

either by the use of plain words, or figures, to express this notion, to which you say they were entire strangers, more clearly than they do. For, according to the most definite language a man can use, the Logos, as existing in the father, prior to the creation, was, according to them, the same thing in him that *reason* is in *man*, which is certainly no proper *person*, distinguishable from the man himself. Will you say that the *man* is one person or thing, and his *reason* another, not comprehended in the *man*? In like manner it is impossible not to infer from the uniform language of these writers, that, according to their ideas, there was nothing in, or belonging to the *Son*, originally, but what was necessarily contained in what they express by the term *Father*. I will add, that if this was not the orthodoxy of the age, there was no orthodoxy in it.

That the *Logos* of the Father, the same that constituted the second person in the trinity, exactly corresponded to the Logos, or reason, or word of man, was the idea of Athanasius himself. Having spoken of the Father, as called the *only God*, because he only is unbegotten, ἀγεννητός, and the *fountain of deity*, πηγή θεότητος, and of the son as *only God of God*, θεός ἐκ θεοῦ, he says, in answer to the question, how this Logos can become a person in God, when it does not so in man; “The word
“conceived in the mind of man does not become
“*man of man*, since it does not live, or subsist;
“but is only the notion of a living and subsisting
“heart.

“ heart. When it is pronounced it has no conti-
 “ nuance, and being often uttered, does not re-
 “ main. Whereas the psalmist says the *Word of*
 “ *the Lord remaineth for ever*, and the evangelist
 “ agrees with him, &c*.”

“ On this subject,” you say, p. 58. “ it is but
 “ justice to Dr. Priestley to acknowledge, what
 “ indeed he ought to have acknowledged for him-
 “ self, that in this misinterpretation of the platonic
 “ fathers, he is not original: that he hath upon
 “ his side the respectable authority of two very
 “ eminent divines of the Roman church, Petavius
 “ and Huetius.” Of this, I assure you, Sir, I
 was quite ignorant; but I see no reason to be ashamed
 of such company, or of any company, in the cause
 of truth.

That any mere *external display of powers*, as you
 say, p. 57. should ever be termed *generation*, is so
 improbable from its manifest want of analogy to
 any thing that ever was called *generation* before or
 since; that such an abuse of words is not to be
 supposed of these writers, or of any person, with-

* Ου γαρ ο λογος τε ανθρωπου ανθρωπος εστιν παρ ανθρω-
 πον· επιτρυπτε ζων εστι, μητε υφους, αλλα ζωης καρδιας η
 υφους κίνημα μορον· και λεγεται παραχρημα, η ουκ εστι·
 και πολλοις κηλυμενος, ουδε ποτε διαμενοι· τον δε τε δευ-
 λογον ανωθεν, ο ψαλμωδός κηκραγει λεγων, εις τον αιωνα ο
 λογος· σε διζμεν ει εν τω κραιω· και συμφωνως αυτω ο θεος
 ειναι του λογον ομολογων· ο Ευαγγελιστης, &c. De Eterna
 substantia filii, &c. contra Sabellii Giegales, Opera, vol. i.
 p. 651.

out

out very positive proof; and in this case you advance nothing but a mere conjecture, destitute of any thing that can give it a colour of probability.

If the Logos had had an actual *personal existence* with all its proper and separate powers, from all eternity, how could he be said to be *generated*, when he only exerted those powers in a particular way? For since, according to your hypothesis, he was always an intelligent person from the beginning, he must have exerted his intellectual faculties in some way or other from all eternity, as much as the father himself; and was the exertion of the faculties of the Father in the creation of the world ever called *a generation of the Father*, by those who supposed creation to be a work of his, performed in time, after the lapse of an eternity, in which nothing had been created? And yet, according to you, this language must have been equally proper with respect to the Father, as with respect to the Son, both having been intelligent persons from all eternity.

“ You say,” p. 52. “ after all that Dr. Priestley
 “ hath written about the resemblance between the
 “ ecclesiastical and the platonic trinity, he has yet,
 “ it seems, to learn, that a *created Logos*, a
 “ Logos which had ever not existed, was no less
 “ an absurdity in the academy, than it is an impiety
 “ in the church. The converts from platonism
 “ must have renounced their philosophy before they
 “ could be the authors of this absurd, this mon-

“strous opinion. As the notion that this doctrine
 “took its rise with them betrays a total ignor-
 “ance of the genuine principles of their school,
 “it is easy to foresee that the arguments brought
 “in support of it can only be founded in gross
 “misconstruction of their language.”

To this I can only say that you discover a total ignorance of what I have asserted, and I do not know how to express myself more intelligibly than I have done. I have no where said, or supposed, that either the Platonists, or the platonizing christians, held that the Logos was created, or that it had ever not existed; but only that, whereas it was originally nothing more than a *property* of the divine mind, it assumed a separate personal character in time. The Logos of the Platonists had, in their opinion, always had a personal existence, because Plato supposed creation to have been eternal; but this was not the opinion of the platonizing christians, who held that the world was not eternal; and therefore, retaining as much of platonism as was consistent with that doctrine, they held that there was a time when the Father was *alone*, and without a son; his Logos or reason being in all that time the same thing in him that reason now is in man; and of this I have produced abundant evidence.

I cannot close this letter on the *personification of the Logos*, without making some observations relating to the first account we have of it.

That

That Christ had a proper permanent pre-existence, as the *Logos of the Father*, first distinctly appears in the writings of Justin Martyr; and from his labouring the point so much as he does, and especially from his providing a retreat, in case he should not be able to prove it, it is most probable that he was the first who started it. However, he also mentions a different opinion on the subject, which probably preceded his own, and paved the way for it; and this was not very remote from the unitarian doctrine.

It was, that the emission of the Logos, as a person, was an occasional thing, and intended to answer particular purposes only; after which it was absorbed into the divine essence again. On this scheme the Logos might have been a real person first at the creation of the world, and again when it was employed in the divine intercourse with the patriarchs, and the children of Israel, in the intervals of which it might have been deprived of its personality; and lastly, have recovered it at the birth of Christ, and have retained it ever after. Whereas, the opinion of Justin was, that, after the first emission of the Logos, at the creation of the world, it was never again absorbed into the divine essence.

“ There are,” says he* (to abridge what he says on this subject) “ I know, who are of opinion, “ that the power, *δυναμις*, which proceeded from

* *Dialogi pars secunda*, Edit. Thirlby, p. 412.

“ the

“ the Father of all, and appeared to Moses,
 “ or to Abraham, or to Jacob, and which, in
 “ different circumstances, was called an *angel*, a
 “ *glory*, or a *man*, remained a power inseparable
 “ from the Father *, just as a beam of light is
 “ inseparable from the sun †, which is in the hea-
 “ vens, and which, when it sets, it carries along
 “ with it. Thus the Father, whenever he pleases,
 “ they say, makes this power to come out of him,
 “ ἀποκινῶν; and whenever he wills, he calls it
 “ back into himself again. And in the same
 “ manner they say he makes angels. But that
 “ angels are permanent beings, I have already
 “ shewn; and that this power, which the prophets
 “ call *God*, and an *angel*, is not like a beam of
 “ light, but remains numerically distinct from its
 “ source, I have shewn at large; observing that
 “ this power, δύναμις, is produced by the power
 “ and will of the Father, but not so as that the
 “ Father loses any thing by its emission, but as
 “ one fire is lighted by another—It is called *Lord*
 “ in the history of the destruction of Sodom, and
 “ rained fire from that Lord who was in heaven,
 “ and who was the Lord of that Lord who was
 “ on earth, as his Father, and God; being the
 “ cause of his being, of his being powerful, and
 “ of his being Lord, and God ‡.”

* Ἀπμνητορ ἡ ἀχωρισον τε πατρὸς ταύτην τῆς δυνάμει
 ὑπαρχεῖν.

† A beam of light was then imagined to be something
 connected with the sun, and not matter emitted from him,
 and not returning to him.

‡ Ος ἡ τε ἐπι γῆς Κυριος Κυριος εἰν ὡς πατήρ ἡ θεὸς αἰτε-
 ας αὐτῷ τε εἶναι ἡ δύναμις ἡ κυριω ἡ θεῶ.

We

We see in this passage in how plausible a manner, and how little likely to alarm men of plain understandings, was the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, as it was first proposed. At first it was nothing more than the *divine power*, occasionally personified (a small step indeed, if any, from pure unitarianism) and afterwards acquiring permanent personality; but still dependent upon the will of God, from whence it proceeded, and intirely subservient to him; which was very different from what is now conceived concerning the second person in the trinity.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

Considerations relating to the doctrine of the Trinity.

DEAR SIR,

I CANNOT help, in this place, making a few remarks on some of your observations with respect to the doctrine of the *trinity*, your ideas of which appear to be those which are commonly termed *Atbanasian*; implying a perfect equality in all the three persons. Indeed, as a strenuous advocate for the church of England, they can be no other.

I. " The

I.

“ The advantage,” you say, p. 69. “ to be
 “ expected from these deep researches, is not any
 “ insight into the manner in which the three divine
 “ persons are united ; a knowledge which is indeed
 “ too high for a man, perhaps for angels ; which
 “ in our present condition at least is not to be
 “ attained, and ought not to be sought. But that
 “ just apprehension of the christian doctrine, which
 “ will shew, that it is not one of those things
 “ that ‘ no miracles can prove ’ will be the certain
 “ fruit of the studies recommended. They will
 “ lead us to see the scripture doctrine in its true
 “ light : that it is, an imperfect discovery, not a
 “ contradiction.”

A *contradiction*, you acknowledge, p. 67, is that
 “ a part is equal to the whole, or that the same
 “ thing, in the same respect, is at the same time
 “ one, and many.” This you admit that nothing
 can prove. “ No testimony,” you say, “ that a
 “ contradiction *is*, should be allowed to over-
 “ power the intuitive conviction that it *cannot be*.
 “ An enquiry, therefore, into the reasonableness of
 “ our faith, as well as just views of its history,
 “ is of great importance.”

Now I ask, wherein does the Athanasian doctrine
 of the trinity differ from a contradiction, as
 you have defined it ? It asserts, in effect, that
 nothing

nothing is wanting to either the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, to constitute each of them truly and properly God; each being equal in eternity, and all divine perfections; and yet that these three, are not *three Gods*, but only *one God*. They are, therefore, both *one* and *many* in the same respect, viz. in each being *perfect God*. This is certainly as much a contradiction as to say that Peter, James, and John, having each of them every thing that is requisite to constitute a complete man, are yet, all together, not *three men*, but only *one man*. For the ideas annexed to the words *God*, or *man*, cannot make any difference in the nature of the two propositions. After the council of Nice, there are instances of the doctrine of the trinity being explained in this very manner. The fathers of that age being particularly intent on preserving the full *equality* of the three persons, they entirely lost sight of their proper *unity*. And explain this doctrine as you will, one of these things must ever be sacrificed to the other.

II.

Notwithstanding what I have quoted from you above, you seem to countenance some sort of *explanation* of the doctrine of the trinity. "The sense" [viz. of Athenagoras] you say, p. 55. "is that the personal existence of a divine Logos "is implied in the very idea of a God. And "the argument rests on a principle which was
" common

“ common to all the platonic fathers, and seems
 “ to be founded in scripture, that the existence
 “ of the Son flows necessarily from the divine
 “ intellect exerted on itself, from the Father’s
 “ contemplation of his own perfections. But as
 “ the Father ever was, his perfections have ever
 “ been, and his intellect has been ever active.
 “ But perfections which have ever been, the ever
 “ active intellect must ever have contemplated;
 “ and the contemplation which has ever been,
 “ must ever have been accompanied with its just
 “ effect, the personal existence of the Son.”

I wish you had shewn what it is in the scriptures, or indeed in the fathers, that gives any countenance to this curious piece of reasoning; and in your reply to me I hope you will not fail to point it out. In the mean time, as we cannot pretend to draw any conclusions from the necessary operations of *one mind*, but from their supposed analogy to those of *other minds*, that is *our own*, you will find yourself embarrassed with a difficulty similar to that of Tertullian, Lactantius, and Athanasius; and must explain to us how it comes to pass, that if the contemplation of the divine perfections of the Father, necessarily produced a distinct person in him, fully equal to himself, a *man’s* contemplation of such perfections, or powers, as he is possessed of, should not produce another intelligent person fully equal to himself?

You

You will, perhaps, say (though you can have nothing to authorize it) that the impossibility of producing this in man, is the imperfection of his faculties, or his limited power of contemplating them. But to cut off that subterfuge, I will ask, why the contemplation of the Son's perfections, which you suppose to be fully equal to those of the Father, and whose energy of contemplation you must likewise suppose equal to that of the Father, does not produce another intelligent being equal to himself; and why are not *persons in the Godhead*, in this manner, multiplied *ad infinitum*? If, for any incomprehensible reason, this mysterious *power of generation* be peculiar to the Father, why does it not still operate? Is he not an unchangeable being, the same now that he was from the beginning, his perfections the same, and his power of contemplating them the same? Why then are not more sons produced? Is he become *ayovos*, incapable of this generation, as the orthodox Fathers used to ask? Or does it depend upon his *will* and *pleasure*, whether he will exert this power of generation? If so, is not the Son as much a *creature*, depending on the will of the creator, as any thing else produced by him, though in another manner; and this whether he be of the same substance, *ομοουσιος*, with him or not?

I should also like to know in what manner the *third person* in the trinity was produced. Was it
by

by the joint exertion of the two first, in the contemplation of their respective perfections? If so, why does not the same operation in them produce a *fourth*, &c. &c. &c.

Admitting, however, this strange account of the generation of the trinity (equal in absurdity to any thing in the Jewish cabala) viz. that the personal existence of the son necessarily flows from the intellect of the Father exerted on itself, it certainly implies a virtual *priority*, or *superiority* in the Father with respect to the Son; and no being can be properly *God* who has any *superior*. In short, your scheme effectually overturns the doctrine of the proper *equality*, as well as that of the *unity* of the three persons in the trinity.

Indeed, Sir, had you lived in some former ticklish times, when words were more narrowly watched than they are now, I think you would have run some risk of being accused of heresy, for thus boldly making the second person in the trinity to be nothing more than an *effect*, though the necessary effect of the Father's contemplation of his own perfections. Far from this was Dr. Waterland, and all the strict Athanasians of the last age. They maintained that the trinity consisted of three persons, all *truly independent* of each other. It is, indeed, very amusing to observe how many totally discordant opinions, schemes as distant from each other as light and darkness, all pass for *orthodoxy* in

in this heedless age; in which we have no councils, synods, or convocations, to watch over the faith. Error itself is hardly more various than modern truth.

III.

You cannot but acknowledge that the proper object of prayer is God the Father, whom you call the first person in the trinity. Indeed, you cannot find in the scriptures any *precept* that will authorize us to address ourselves to any other person; nor any proper *example* of it. Every thing that you can alledge to this purpose, as Stephen's short ejaculatory address to Christ, whom he had just before seen in vision, &c. is very inconsiderable. Our Saviour himself always prayed to his Father, and with as much humility and resignation as the most dependent being in the universe could possibly do; always addressing him as his *father*, or the *author of his being*; and he directs his disciples to pray to the same great being; *whom only*, he says, *we ought to serve*.

Had he intended to guard against all mistake on this subject, by speaking of God as the author of his being, *in the same sense* in which he is the author of being to all men, he could not have done it more expressly than he has, by calling him his father and our father, his God and our God. At the same time he calls his disciples his *brethren**. *Go to my brethren, and say unto*

* John xx. 17.

G

them,

them, I ascend unto my father and your father, to my God and your God. Can you, Sir, read this, and say that we unitarians wrest the scriptures, and are not guided by the plain sense of them?

Accordingly, the practice of praying to the Father only, was long universal in the christian church. The short addresses to Christ, as those in the Litany, *Lord have mercy on us, Christ have mercy on us*, being comparatively of late date. In the Clementine liturgy, the oldest that is extant, contained in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, which were probably composed about the 4th century, there is no trace of any such thing. Origen, in a large treatise on the subject of prayer, urges very forcibly the propriety of praying to the father only, and not to Christ; and as he gives no hints that the public forms of prayer had any thing reprehensible in them in that respect, we are naturally led to conclude that, in his time, such petitions to Christ were unknown in the public assemblies of christians; and such hold have early established customs on the minds of men, that, excepting the Moravians only, whose prayers are always addressed to Christ, the general practice of trinitarians themselves is to pray to the father only.

Now, please, Sir, to consider on what *principle* could this early and universal practice have been founded. What is there in your doctrine of a trinity, consisting of three equal persons, to entitle

entitle the *Father* to that distinction, more than the Son, or the Spirit? I doubt not but that, considering the thing *ab initio*, you yourself would have thought that, since, of these three persons, it is the *second* that was the *maker of the world*, and that is the *immediate governor of it*, he is that person of the three with whom *we have most to do*; and therefore he is that person to whom our prayers ought to be addressed. This, I should think, would have been a natural conclusion, even if Christ had not been thought to be equal to the Father, but only the maker and the governor of the world under him; supposing him to have had power originally given him equal to the making and governing of it; as I have shewn at large in my *Disquisitions on matter and spirit*, vol. i. p. 376. For we should naturally look up to that being on whom we immediately depend; knowing that it must be his proper province to attend to us.

If there should have been any reason, in the nature of things, though undiscoverable and incomprehensible by us, why the world should have been made and supported by some being of communicated power, and delegated authority, rather than by the self-existent and supreme being himself (and if the fact be so, there must have been some good reason for it) that unknown reason, whatever it be, naturally presents this derived being to us, as the proper object of our prayers. And I must observe once more, that a derived

pre-existent being, supposed to animate the body of Jesus, and who is not also the maker of the world, is a creature of imagination only, whose existence is not to be inferred, with the least colourable pretext, from the scriptures. If the sacred writers do represent Christ as having pre-existed at all, they certainly suppose him to be the maker of all things. Let those, therefore, who pretend to maintain the Arian hypothesis, either assert it in its original and proper extent, or else abandon it altogether.

But supposing this second person in the trinity to be our independent maker, governor, and final judge, the propriety of praying to him, and to him exclusively, is so obvious, that no consideration whatever could have prevented the practice, if such had been the real belief of the christian world from the beginning. That christians did not do so at first, but prayed habitually to the Father only, is, therefore, with me almost a demonstration that they did not consider Christ in that light; but that whatever they might think of him, they did not regard him as being a proper *object of worship*, and consequently not as possessed of the attributes that are proper to constitute him one, and therefore not as truly *God*. The persuasion that he was truly God, and that God on whom we immediately depend, would unavoidably have drawn after it the habitual practice of praying to him, as it has at length effected with respect to the Moravians; and in spite of constant

constant usage, and against all scripture precept and example, the practice has more or less prevailed with all trinitarians. Petrarch, we find by his letters, generally prayed to Christ; that pious treatise of Thomas-a-Kempis, on the *imitation of Christ*, consists of nothing besides addresses to him, and they compose the greater part of the *litany* in the Church of England.

When I was myself a trinitarian, I remember praying conscientiously to all the three persons without distinction, only beginning with the Father; and what I myself did in the serious simplicity of my heart, when young, would, I doubt not, have been done by all christians from the beginning, if their minds had then been impressed, as mine was, with the firm persuasion that all the three persons were fully equal in power, wisdom, goodness, omnipresence, and all divine attributes. This argument I recommend to your serious consideration, as it is with me a sufficient proof, that originally Christ was not considered as a proper object of worship by christians, and consequently neither as God, nor as the maker or governor of the world under God.

IV.

I wish you would reflect a little on the subject, and then inform us what there is in the doctrine of the trinity, *in itself considered*, that can recommend it as a part of a system of religious truth. All

that can be said for it is that the doctrine, however improbable in itself, is necessary to explain some particular texts of scripture; and that if it had not been for those particular texts, we should have found no want of it. For there is neither any fact in *nature*, nor any one purpose of *morals* (which are the object and end of all religion) that requires it.

Is not one self-existent, almighty, infinitely wise, and perfectly good being, fully equal to the production of all things, and also to the support and government of the worlds which he has made? A second person in the godhead cannot be really wanted for this purpose, as far as we can conceive.

Whatever may be meant by the *redemption of the world*, is not the being who made it equal to that also? If his creatures offend him, and by repentance and reformation become the proper objects of his forgiveness, is it not more natural to suppose that he has *within himself*, a power of forgiving them, and of restoring them to his favour, without the strange expedient of another person, fully equal to himself, condescending to animate a human body, and dying for us? We never think of any similar expedient in order to forgive, with the greatest propriety and effect, offences committed by our children against ourselves.

Whatever you suppose to be the use of a *third person* in the trinity, is not the influence of the first person sufficient for that also? The descent of the
holy

holy spirit upon the apostles was to enable them to work miracles. But when our Sayiour was on earth, the *Father within him*, and acting by him, did the same thing.

You also cannot deny that, exclusive of some particular texts, the general tenor of scripture does not suppose such a trinity as you contend for. Is it not the general tenor of the Old and New Testament, that the supreme God himself, and not any other person acting under him, was the proper maker of the world; and that he himself, and not any other being, supports and governs it? Is not the same great being, the God and Father of us all, and even the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, represented as forgiving the sins of his penitent offspring *freely*, and exhorting us to forgive as we ourselves hope to be forgiven? And are we to require any ransom, recompence, or atonement of a penitent brother?

You will say that there are obscure intimations of the doctrine of the trinity in the Old Testament, as in God's saying, *Let us make man*, and *let us go down and confound their language*, &c. But even that literal interpretation of these expressions which you contend for does not really favour your hypothesis. For then there must have been at least *two persons* concerned in making the world, and also two or more persons must have had that intercourse with mankind, which you say was the province of the second person in the trinity only.

The plural number forming the regal style in the East, furnishes a very easy explanation of all such texts as these; especially considering, that the word denoting *God* in Hebrew is in the plural number.

Why then, dear Sir, should you be so desirous of retaining such a doctrine as this of the trinity, which you must acknowledge has an uncouth appearance, has always confounded the best reason of mankind, and drives us to the undesirable doctrine of *inexplicable mysteries*; to the great offence of Jews, Mahometans, and unbelievers in general, without some urgent necessity? Of two difficulties we are always authorized to chuse the least; and why should we risk the whole of christianity, for the sake of so unnecessary and undesirable a part?

Try then whether you cannot hit upon some method or other of reconciling a few particular texts, not only with *common sense*, but also with the general and the obvious tenor of the *scriptures themselves*. In this you will, no doubt, find some difficulty at first, from the effect of early impressions, and association of ideas; but an attention to the true idiom of the scripture language, with such helps as you may want, but will easily find, for the purpose, will satisfy you, that the doctrine of the trinity furnishes no proper clue to the right understanding of those texts, but will only serve to mislead you.

In

In the mean time, this doctrine of the trinity wears so disagreeable an aspect, that I think every reasonable man must say with the excellent Archbishop Tillotson, with respect to the Athanasian creed, "I wish we were well rid of it." This is not setting up reason against the scriptures, but reconciling reason with the scriptures, and the scriptures with themselves. On your scheme they are irreconcilably at variance.

V.

In a mode of writing, altogether improper in a serious discourse, you ridicule the Socinian interpretations of scripture, as unnatural, and contrary to their obvious meaning; and after a long enumeration of things which you say *may be clear to my apprehension*, but which you insinuate can never be clear to the apprehension of any man; you add, p. 14. "But to others, who have not sagacity to discern that the true meaning of an inspired writer must be the reverse of the natural and obvious sense of the expressions which he employs, the force of the conclusion, that the primitive christians could not believe our Lord to be more than a mere man, because the apostles had told them that he was the creator of the universe, will be little understood."

In answer to this, which I suppose you intended for *irony*, and which I shall not endeavour to retort, I shall content myself with taking the
very

very text which you produce, as the most difficult for an unitarian to reconcile to his opinion, and shew you expressions in it which it is absolutely impossible for you to accommodate to your own principles, without, to adopt your own language, "making the true meaning of the writer the very reverse of the natural and obvious sense of the expressions which he employs."

improved creature

The passage, which is of your own selection, is Coll. i. 15. &c. in which Paul affirms that Christ is the *image of the invisible God*, and the *first born of every creature*; and yet you make him not the *image* of God, but *God himself*, and so far from being a *creature*, that he is the *creator of all things*. Produce any Socinian interpretation of a text of scripture more directly contrary to its obvious meaning, if you can. Whatever difficulty an unitarian may find in accommodating the latter part of the passage to his sentiments, you must find much more to accommodate the former part to the Athanasian doctrine. And I will venture to say, that for one text in which you can pretend to find any thing harsh or difficult to me, I will engage to produce ten that must create more difficulty to you.

How strangely must you torture the plainest language, and in which there is not a shadow of figure, to interpret to your purpose, 1 Tim. ii. 5. *There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*; 1 Cor. viii. 6.

To

To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him; or that expression of our Saviour himself, John xvii. 3. That they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Never upbraid us unitarians with torturing the scriptures, while you have these, and a hundred other plain texts to strain at, and bend to your Athanasian hypothesis; besides many *general arguments* from reason, and the scriptures, of more real force than any particular texts, to answer.

VI.

There is something inexplicable and not to be accounted for in the conduct of several of the evangelists, indeed all of them, upon the supposition of their having entertained the same sentiments concerning Christ that you do. Each of the gospels was certainly intended to be a sufficient instruction in the fundamental principles of the doctrine of christianity. But there is nothing that can be called an account of the divine or even the super-angelic nature of Christ in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, or Luke; and allowing that there may be some colour for it in the introduction of the gospel of John, it is remarkable that there are many passages in his gospel which are decisively in favour of his simple humanity.

Now these evangelists could not imagine that either the Jews or the Gentiles, for whose use the gospels

gospels were written, would stand in no need of information on a subject of so much importance, and which was so very remote from the apprehensions of them both; and which would at the same time have so effectually covered the *reproach of the cross*, which was continually objected to the christians of that age. If the doctrine of the trinity be true, it is, no doubt, in the highest degree important and interesting. Since, therefore, the evangelists give no certain and distinct account of it, and say nothing of its importance, it may be safely inferred that it was unknown to them.

Why was not the doctrine of the *trinity* taught as explicitly, and in as definite manner, in the New Testament at least, as the doctrine of the divine *unity* is taught in both the Old and New Testaments, if it be a truth? And why is the doctrine of the *unity* always delivered in so unguarded a manner, and without any exception made in favour of the trinity, to prevent any mistake with respect to it, as is always now done in our orthodox catechisms, creeds, and discourses on the subject? For you cannot deny but the doctrine of the trinity looks so like an infringement of that of the unity, on which the greatest possible stress is always laid in the scriptures, that it required to be at least hinted at, if not well defined and explained when the divine unity was spoken of. You are content, however, to build so strange and inexplicable a doctrine as that of the trinity upon mere inferences

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from casual expressions, and cannot pretend to one clear, express, and unequivocal lesson on the subject.

There are many, very many passages of scripture, which inculcate the doctrine of the divine unity in the clearest and strongest manner. Produce one such passage in favour of the trinity, if you can. And why should we believe things so mysterious without the clearest and most express evidence?

VII.

I would farther recommend it to your consideration, how the apostles could continue to call Christ *a man*, as they always do, both in the book of Acts, and in their epistles, after they had discovered him to be God. After this it must have been highly degrading, unnatural, and improper, notwithstanding his appearance in human form. Custom will reconcile us to strange conceptions of things, and very uncouth modes of speech; but let us take up the matter *ab initio*, and put ourselves in the place of the apostles and first disciples of Christ.

They certainly saw and conversed with him at first on the supposition of his being a man, as much as themselves. Of this there can be no doubt. Their surprize, therefore, upon being informed that he was not a man, but really God, or even the maker of the world under God, would
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be just as great as ours would now be on discovering that any of our acquaintance, or at least a very good man and a prophet, was in reality God, or the maker of the world. Let us consider then how we should feel, how we should behave towards such a person, and how we should speak of him afterwards. No one, I am confident, would ever call that being a *man*, after he was convinced that he was *God*. He would always speak of him in a manner suitable to his proper rank.

Suppose that any two men of our acquaintance should appear, on examination, to be the angels *Michael* and *Gabriel*; should we ever after this call them *men*? Certainly not. But we should naturally say to our friends, "those two persons whom we took to be men, are not *men*, but "*angels in disguise*." This language would be natural. Had Christ, therefore, been any thing more than man before he came into the world, and especially had he been God, or the maker of the world, he never could have been, or have been considered as being, *a man*, while he was in it; for he could not divest himself of his superior and proper nature. However *disguised*, he would always, in fact, have been whatever he had been before, and would have been so *stiled* by all who truly knew him.

Least of all would Christ have been considered as a man in *reasoning* and *argumentation*, though
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his external appearance should have so far put men off their guard, as to lead them to give him that appellation. Had the apostle Paul considered Christ as being any thing more than a man, with respect to his *nature*, he could never have urged, with the least propriety, or effect, that *as by man came death, so by man came also the resurrection of the dead*. For it might have been unanswerably replied, "This is not the case; for indeed by man comes death, but not by man, but by God, or the creator of man under God, comes the resurrection of the dead."

VIII.

There is also another consideration which I would recommend to you who maintain that Christ was either God, or the maker of the world under God. It is this. The manner in which our Lord speaks of himself, and of the power by which he worked miracles, is inconsistent, according to the common construction of language, with the idea of his being possessed of any proper power of his own, more than other men had.

If Christ was the maker of the world, and if, in the creation, he exerted no power but what properly belonged to himself, and what was as much *his own* as the power of speaking or walking belongs to man (though depending ultimately upon that supreme power in which we all live, and move, and have our being) he could not with any propriety,

propriety, and without knowing that he must be misunderstood, have said that *of himself he could do nothing*, that the *words which he spake were not his own*, and that *the father within him did the works*. For if any ordinary man, doing what other men usually do, should apply this language to himself, and say that it was not he that spake or acted, but God who spake and acted by him, and that otherwise he was not capable of so speaking or acting at all ; we should not scruple to say that his language was either sophistical, or else downright false or blasphemous.

If this conclusion would be just upon the supposition that Christ had created all things, working miracles by a power properly his own, though derived ultimately from God, much more force has it on the supposition of his working miracles by a power not derived from any being whatever, but as much originally in himself as the power of the Father *.

It would also be a shocking abuse of language, and would warrant any kind of deception and im-

* That Christ was not the real maker of the world, but God the Father only, without the aid or instrumentality of any other being whatever, is abundantly evident from the scriptures. For a most satisfactory proof of this I refer my readers to Mr. Lindsey's *Sequel to his Apology*, ch. ix. p. 451.

If it be said that this great pre-existent being was divested of his former powers when he became man ; it may be asked, What use was there of such a being ? Why might not a mere man have answered the purpose, if this superior being must be reduced to the state of man, in order to act his part on earth with propriety ?

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position, if Christ could be supposed to say, *that his Father was greater than he*, and at the same time secretly mean only *his human nature*, whereas his divine nature was at the same time fully equal to that of the Father. Upon the same principle a man might say, that Christ never suffered, that he never died, or rose again from the dead, meaning his divine nature only, and not his human. Indeed, Sir, there is no use in language, nor any guard against deception, if such liberties as these are to be allowed.

IX.

You must, Sir, be much at a loss, indeed, for arguments in support of your doctrine of the trinity, when you look for any thing like it in heathen antiquity. "The notion of a trinity," you say, p. 44, "more or less removed from the purity of the christian faith, is found to be a leading principle in all the ancient schools of philosophy, and in the religions of almost all nations; and traces of an early popular belief of it appear even in the abominable rites of idolatrous worship. Their information concerning it," you say, p. 45, "could only be drawn from tradition, founded upon earlier revelations" (meaning than those of Moses) "from the scattered fragments of the ancient patriarchal creed, that creed which was universal before the defection of the first idolaters, which the corruptions of idolatry, gross and enormous as they were, could never totally obliterate.

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“ Thus the doctrine of the trinity is rather confirmed than discredited by the suffrage of the heathen sages ; since the resemblance of the christian faith, and the pagan philosophy, in this article, when fairly interpreted, appears to be nothing less than the consent of the latest and earliest revelations.”

Without troubling you with any remarks upon the “ joint worship of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, the triad,” as you call them, “ of the Roman capitol,” or the THREE MIGHTY ONES, in Samothrace, to which you say, p. 44, they may be traced ; and the worship of which in that place you suppose, with Eusebius, to be earlier than the days of Abraham ; I say, without troubling you with any remarks upon this most obscure part of heathen mythology, concerning which there are many opinions, and your’s I think the least probable of them all, I will only ask you three questions, to which I beg your explicit answer.

First, If there be so many traces of the doctrine of the trinity in the heathen philosophy, and in the heathen worship, why are there no more of them to be found in the Jewish scriptures, and in the Jewish worship ? Secondly, If there be such traces of the doctrine of the trinity in the Jewish writings and worship, how came the Jews in our Saviour’s time, and also the body of the Jewish nation, to this day, not to discover these traces ? Thirdly, If the Jews had been once in the possession of this knowledge, but had lost it in the time of our Saviour,

Saviour, why did not he, who rectified other abuses, rectify this, the most important of them all? Tertullian was so far from imagining that the worship of the trinity was known to the Jews, that, as I have observed, vol. i. p. 60, he makes the knowledge of the trinity peculiar to the christian dispensation. The same was the opinion of Athanasius, and I believe the Fathers in general.

As to the trinity of Plato, whatever you or I may know, or may not know, concerning it, it was certainly a thing very unlike your Athanasian doctrine; for it was never imagined that the three component members of that trinity were either *equal* to each other, or strictly speaking *one*.

Every attempt that has yet been made to *explain* the doctrine of the trinity I scruple not to call an insult on the common sense of mankind. When I read that of your's mentioned above, viz. that the Father is the fountain of deity, and that the second person in the trinity was produced by the first person contemplating his own perfections, I can hardly help fancying that I am got back into the very darkest of the dark ages, or at least that I am reading Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, or Duns Scotus.

You speak of the *catholic doctrine of the trinity*. There is also, Sir, a catholic doctrine of *transubstantiation*; and if you would try your skill, you would find that, with the same kind of arguments,

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from reason and scripture, you would be just as able an advocate for the one, as you are for the other. The learned catholics at the time of the reformation thought that they trod on as firm and as sure ground in defending the latter, as you now do in defending the former. The two doctrines are so nearly akin, that they cannot bear a long separation. They differ only in this, that the doctrine of transubstantiation implies a *physical impossibility*, whereas that of the trinity, as unfolded in the Athanasian creed implies a *mathematical* one; and to this only we usually give the name of *contradiction*.

I am truly concerned to find by your *Charge*, published at the request of the respectable body of Clergy to whom it was delivered, that the doctrine of a trinity, in its most objectionable form, must be maintained at all events by the proper members of the church of England, as its most sacred palladium. Other divines of your church have attempted to explain and palliate it, so that it might be hoped that, in time, it would have been explained away, and lost; and at length have been struck out of your articles and forms of worship; whereas now, it seems, it is to be maintained in all its rigour; and as you recommend the writings of Bp. Bull, without exception, I presume you approve of his Defence of the *damnatory clause* in the Athanasian creed (indeed you mention this among his most valuable works) and this in my opinion, is going back into all the darkness and horror of popery.

But

But as you cannot bring back those *times*, your damnatory clauses, and excommunications, will now have little effect. Yet as there are liberal sentiments in your performance, I am willing to hope that, on re-consideration, you will, at least, retract your recommendation of *that* piece of your favourite author.

However, next to the church's reforming itself in this important article, it is to be wished by all the true friends of reformation, that your *terms of communion*, p. 71, may be universally understood, and adhered to; for then I am confident that a majority of the thinking clergy, whose sentiments on this subject are in general, I believe, those of Dr. Clarke, or Arian, and many of them Socinian, would quit your communion at once. And in that case I have little doubt but that the characters and abilities of those *ejected clergy* would be found to be such as you could not now bear the want of; and then either a reformation, *invita ecclesia*, or a total dissolution of the hierarchy, would immediately follow.

I am, &c.

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LETTER

L E T T E R VIII.

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES.

I.

DEAR SIR,

TO vindicate Eusebius, or his author, in asserting that Theodotus was the first who advanced the doctrine of Christ being a mere man, you say, p. 37, "That Theodotus in this article so far surpassed the earlier heresiarchs, that the merit of being the inventor of the mere humanity, in the precise and full meaning of the words, is with great propriety and truth ascribed to him. When the Cerinthians and the Ebionites affirmed that Jesus had no existence previous to Mary's conception, and that he was literally and physically the carpenter's son, it might justly be said of them, that they asserted the mere humanity of the redeemer: especially as it could not be foreseen, that the impiety would ever go a greater length than this, of ascribing to him an origin merely human. These heretics however went no farther, as I conceive than to deny our Lord's original divinity: they admitted I know not what unintelligible exaltation of his nature, which took place, as they conceived, upon his ascension, by which he became no less the object of worship than if his nature had been originally divine."

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This, as far as I know, is advanced on your own authority only. I desire to know where you find that the Ebionites paid any kind of adoration to Christ, after he was ascended to heaven, more than Theodotus did. As the extraordinary power communicated to Christ while he was on earth did not make his *nature* more than human, so neither could any power conferred upon him after his ascension; and if God alone is the proper object of worship, Christ, being still *not God*, is as improper an object of worship now, as he was before. If any ancient unitarians worshipped Christ after his ascension (of which I believe there is no evidence) Theodotus might do it, and the Ebionites might not, for any thing that appears to the contrary. Socinus prayed to Christ, though he considered him as a mere man, in his present exalted state.

As to your supposition that Theodotus might be the first person who taught the unitarian doctrine in Rome, which is a second plea which you advance for the credit of Eusebius, he himself says nothing about it. And as Tertullian says that in his time the unitarians were the *greater part of the believers*, it is highly improbable that there should be none of them at Rome, where there was a conflux of all religions, and of all sects.

You here speak of the *impiety* of the unitarians. Before you repeat any expressions of this kind, I beg you would pause a little, and consider how

such language might be retorted upon yourself. If it be impiety to reduce a God to the state of a man, is it not equally impious to raise any man to a state of equality with God, that God who has declared that he will not give his glory to another, who has no equal, and who in this respect styles himself a jealous God? This you may say respects the gods of the heathens. But what were the heathen gods, but either the sun, moon, and stars, or dead men, all creatures of God, and deriving their power from him? And if Christ be not *God*, he must be a creature of God too; for there can be no medium between creature and creator.

I do not call it impiety in you, but it sounds unpleasantly in my ears, to apply, as you do, the term *holy Father* to Athanasius. The catholics, I believe, apply it to Ignatius Loyola. Our Saviour applied it to his God and Father, and I wish it had always remained so appropriated. It is high time to drop that style, even with respect to a more holy man than Athanasius was.

II.

In a work of great variety and extent, I was well aware that I could not expect to escape all oversights; but I was confident they could not be of much consequence. The expectation has been verified in both its parts. You have set me right with respect to the exactness of two of my *quotations*; and I should have thanked you for it,
if

if you had noted the oversights with good-nature ; which would have done you no discredit, and might not have lessened the weight of your animadversions.

But in some of the cases in which you pretend to set me right, you are much more mistaken than I have been. This is particularly the case with respect to your censure of Dr. Clarke and myself, concerning the *piety* ascribed to the ancient unitarians by Origen. I have lately procured the original, and I appeal to your readers whether you have not misrepresented the fact, and not Dr. Clarke, or myself.

You say, p. 34, that “ Origen says, not that “ they were pious, but that they boasted that they “ were pious, or affected piety. Piety,” you add, “ and the affectation of piety, belong to “ opposite characters.” According to you, therefore, Origen considered these unitarians as impious persons, the very reverse of pious. But if the passage be carefully inspected, it will appear that Origen, notwithstanding he uses the word *ευχόμενοι*, was far from representing these ancient unitarians as only *pretending to piety*, and *boasting* of it ; but considered them as persons who really dreaded least, by admitting Christ to be God, they should infringe upon the honour that was due to the Father only.

“ By these means,” he says, “ may be explained that which greatly disturbs many persons, who plead

plead a principle of piety, and who fear “to make
 “two Gods *.” He afterwards recurs to the same
 subject, and introduces it as an objection of persons
 with whom he would not trifle, and whom he was
 far from charging with hypocrisy. “But since,”
 he says, “it is probable that many may be
 “offended, because we say that one is the true
 “God, namely the Father, and besides this true
 “God there are many who are made Gods by
 “participation; fearing that the glory of him,
 “who excels all creatures, should be brought down
 “to that of others, who attained the appellation of
 “Gods, &c †.” On the whole, therefore, I think
 that Origen must have thought as respectfully of
 these early unitarians as I had represented him to
 do; and that he really considered them as objecting
 to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ from the
 very best principles.

In translating the passage in Theophilus, in which
 mention is made of God’s speaking to nothing but
 his own *word* and *wisdom*, I inadvertently used the
 particle *or* for *and*, as you observe, p. 48; but I
 do not see how the right translation is at all less

* Καὶ το πολλοὶ φιλοθεοὶ εἶναι εὐχαμένους ταρσάζον, εὐλα-
 ζομένους δύο αναγορεύσαι θεοὺς. Comment. in Johannem,
 Edit. Huettii, vol. ii. p. 46.

† Αλλ’ ἐπεὶ εἰς ὅσον προσκοψαίμεν τινὰς τοῖς εἰρημινούσι, ἕως μὲν
 ἀληθινὸς θεὸς τε πατὴρ ἀπαγγελλόμενος, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ
 θεοῦ θεῶν πλείονων τῇ μετοχῇ τε θεὸς γινόμενων, εὐλαβομένους
 τὴν τε πᾶσαν κτίσιν ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ δοξᾶν ἐξισῶσαι τοῖς λοιποῖς
 τῆς θεοῦ προσηγορίας τογχανοῖσι, &c. Ibid. p. 47.

favourable

favourable to my argument, as it may still be interpreted of God's speaking, as it were, to *himself*, or to *his own attributes*, and by no means necessarily implies that the *word* and *wisdom* of God were distinct persons. However, I have other instances in proof of what I have advanced that are not liable to any charge of ambiguity, which it therefore behoved you to consider.

I also mistranslated a sentence in Theophilus, concerning his *trinity*. It was in consequence of his using a singular verb instead of a plural; but I have no doubt of your translation, p. 59, being right, and shall adopt it. I am still, however, fully satisfied, that neither Theophilus, nor any person of his age, made a proper *trinity of persons in the Godhead*; for they had no idea of the perfect equality of the second and third persons to the first.

You say, p. 61, "that they scrupled not to ascribe an equal divinity to all the three persons." If by *equal divinity* you mean something that might be equally called *divine*, though in a different sense, I admit it; but that will make nothing for *your trinity*. And that the fathers before the Council of Nice asserted, in the most explicit manner, the superiority of the Father to the Son, see my third section, in which you will find unanswerable proof of it.

Whenever the Antenicene fathers used the term *God* absolutely, they always meant the *Father only*,

as you do not deny. But if, in their idea, the Father had been no more entitled to the appellation of God than the Son, or the Spirit, they would certainly have confined the use of the word God to express *divinity in general*, and have used the word *Father*, and not *God*, when they really meant the Father only, exclusively of the two other persons. Had there been no proper correlative to the word *Son*, as a person, your explanation might have been attended to, but since the term *Father* is perfectly correlative to the term *Son*, and as familiar, it would certainly have been used by them to denote the Father, as well as the term *Son* to denote the Son. It is natural, therefore, to conclude that their custom of using the term God to denote the Father only, was derived to them from earlier times, in which no other than the Father was deemed to be God, in any proper sense of the word. This language was continued long after, from a change of ideas, it ceased to be proper.

Very happily, the word God is still, in common use, appropriated to the Father, so that none but professed Theologians are habitually Trinitarians, and probably not even these at all times; and while the scriptures are read without the comments of men, the Father alone will be considered as God, and the sole object of worship, exclusively of the Son or the Spirit. But while a different doctrine is taught in christian schools, and continually held up to the world in the writings of christian divines, those who are not christians, and who will not take
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the pains to study the scriptures themselves, must receive a very unfavourable impression of our religion; and the manifest absurdity and impiety of our doctrine will effectually prevent its reception by them. I therefore think it of the greatest consequence to christianity, that this doctrine of the trinity (which I consider as one of its most radical corruptions) should be renounced, in the most open and unequivocal manner, by all those whose minds are so far enlightened as to be convinced that it is a corruption and an innovation in the christian doctrine, the reverse of what it was in its primitive purity; and that they should exert themselves to enlighten the minds of others.

I am, &c.

THE CONCLUDING LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE now finished my reply to your animadversions on my *History*, omitting nothing that I think to be of any consequence to your argument. If you should think that I have overlooked any thing material, and please to point it out to me, I will answer it as explicitly as I can: for I hope that this will only be the beginning of our correspondence on the subject, as I would gladly discuss it with you in the fullest manner.

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I only wish for your own sake, and for the more advantageous investigation of the truth, that you would drop that sarcastic manner of writing, which is so conspicuous in the greater part of your performance, and I should think peculiarly improper for the occasion on which it was composed. That mode of writing is also inconsistent with the compliments you sometimes pay me, unless you meant them to be ironical also.

Some of those compliments are, I think, rather imprudent, and unfavourable to your purpose. "In philosophical subjects," you say, p. 29, "Dr. Priestley would be the last to reason from principles assumed without proof. But in divinity and ecclesiastical history, he expects that his own assertion, or that of writers of his own persuasion, however uninformed or prejudiced, should pass with the whole christian world for proof of the boldest assumptions."

You should, indeed Sir, be cautious how you lay these things before your readers; because it is very possible that they may draw a very different conclusion from them; and think that, if I have been so cautious, and so successful in the investigation of truth in one province, I may, having the same talents, make the same successful application of them in other provinces. For the same *mental habits*, generally accompany the same men, in every scene of life, and in every mode of exertion. Your readers, therefore, may think it very improbable

bable that a work written with so much care and attention, by such a person as you describe me to be, should deserve the character which you give of mine. "No work," you say, p. 66, "was ever sent abroad under the title of *history*, containing less of truth than his, in proportion to its volume." The passages which I have quoted, p. 4. 11. 14. and 89, are gross and coarse insults; but they affect yourself only, and not me. This is more extraordinary, as in other parts of your work, you write with great candour and liberality. Your conclusion I particularly admire. My address to you on the subject of *necessity* was uniformly respectful.

It was particularly illiberal in you, and what I am willing to hope you will never repeat, to use the term *conventicle*, p. 28, in speaking of the places of public worship, in which I and Mr. Lindley officiate. Would not that contemptuous appellation have applied equally well to the societies of the primitive christians, or to those of all the dissenters from the church of Rome before the reformation? And what is it that has given your places of public worship a more honourable title, but the sanction of the *civil powers*, with which my religion never had any *alliance*. I glory in such independence, and opprobrium.

By *conventicle* is usually meant an *unlawful assembly*. But since the late act of parliament in favour of Dissenters, our places of worship are

as *legal* as yours. The only difference between them is, that ours are not supported by the wealth of the state, as yours are; so that I am unjustly compelled to contribute to your maintenance, while you, instead of paying any thing towards mine, insult me for it. Our *meeting houses* are equally known to the laws, and protected by them. If by conventicles you meant nothing more than a term of reproach, the good manners of the present age ought to have protected them from such an insult.

If your pride, as *a churchman*, p. 71, and the contemptuous airs you give yourself with respect to dissenters, be founded on the idea of your being a member of a great *establishment*; pray, Sir, what is your church establishment in this country? It is a thing of yesterday, compared to the far more ancient, and venerable church of Rome, whose members consider you as a *schismatic* and a *sectary*, as much as myself. If, on the contrary, you boast of your *separation from the church of Rome*, that *mother of harlots, and abominations*, consider that the community of christians to which I belong, is several removes farther from her than yours, and is therefore less likely to be *one of those harlots*, of which she is the *mother*.

On any consideration, therefore, I think that a style of greater modesty would have become you better. The time is approaching that will try *every man's work, what it is*; and if we learn

learn the pure faith of the gospel, and our lives be conformable to it, it will not then be inquired whether we learned it in a *church* or a *conventicle*; in a church, such as you have access to, and from which I am excluded, or in such *conventicles* as the apostles were contented with.

As you strongly and repeatedly recommend the writings of Bishop Bull, with which, I own, I was but little acquainted, I have been induced to purchase them; and having *looked pretty carefully through them*, I find they have been the chief store-house of weapons to yourself and others. Having found, therefore, *where your great strength lie*, I cannot help wishing that you would publish the whole of your great champion's works in English, and thus *put forth all your strength* at once. It would give me sincere pleasure to see you do this, and at the same time to avow yourself their defender.

As you rank yourself, p. 5, among "those whom the indulgence of providence has released from the more laborious offices of the priesthood*", to whom your more occupied brethren have a right to look up for support and succour in the common cause," this may be one of the "services," to which "you stand peculiarly engaged," as well as to answer

* I find no trace of any *christian priesthood* in the New Testament, except what belongs to all christians, who are figuratively siled *Kings and Priests unto God*.

my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. "It is
 "you say for them" (speaking of those among
 whom you rank yourself) "to stand forth the
 "champions of the common faith, and the ad-
 "vocates of their order. It is for them to wipe
 "off the aspersions injuriously cast upon the sons
 "of the establishment, as uninformed in the
 "true grounds of the doctrine which they teach,
 "or insincere in their belief of it. To this duty
 "they are indispensably obliged by their provi-
 "dential exemption from work of a harder kind.
 "It is the proper business of the station which
 "is allotted them in Christ's household. And
 "deep will be their shame, and insupportable
 "their punishment, if in the great day of rec-
 "koning it should appear, that they have received
 "the wages of a service which hath never been
 "performed."

I am glad, Sir, to find that you have so just a
 sense of the important duties of your elevated
 situation; and thinking the translation of bishop
 Bull's works to be naturally comprised in your
 description of the duties incumbent upon you in
 it, I am ready to join with your *weaker brethren*,
 as you call them (whose attainments you repre-
 sent as very low) in inviting you to undertake it;
 imagining, as I sincerely do, that the cause of
 truth will be promoted by it. And to some of
 those *weaker brethren*, it may be more agreeable,
 as well as take up less time, to read bishop Bull's
 works in English than in Latin. In my opinion,

no

no writings are more easy to be refuted than those of this bishop. And though, incumbered with what you call the laborious offices of the priesthood, as well as engaged in a variety of other pursuits, I shall not think it any great addition to my labours, if I undertake to reply to you, thus ably, as you may think yourself, supported.

You have, I perceive, some advantages which I have not, especially in having access to *scarce books*. I, for instance, had not so much as heard of the work of Daniel Zuicker, from which you suppose I have borrowed most of my arguments; whereas, you appear to be well acquainted with it, and all the writings of that author, or you could not have said as you do, p. 9, "Nor is a single argument
" to be found in the writings either of Zuicker,
" or Episcopius, which is not unanswerably con-
" futed by our learned Dr. George Bull, afterwards
" Lord Bishop of St. David's, in three celebrated
" treatises, which deserve the particular attention
" of every one who would take upon him to be
" either a teacher, or an historian of the christian
" faith."

You should not, however, have charged me with borrowing from a work which, though in your possession, you might have known was not very common. A learned friend, whom I desired to enquire for it, tells me, that it is not to be found at any bookfeller's in London, in the British Museum.

feum, or in the Bodleian or Sion libraries; and that at last he enquired of particular persons most likely to have it, but none of them could tell him where it was to be met with*. I shall endeavour, however, to make the most of such books as I have, and in time I may be able to procure more.

But what is of more importance than any thing else in these studies, is a sincere *love of truth*, and a cool and patient investigation of it, which I shall endeavour to cultivate. I hope also to keep my mind always open to conviction, and that I shall not neglect to avail myself of any light that may be furnished me, from friend or from foe.

Hoping to hear from you as soon as your leisure will permit; and assuring you of the pleasure it will give me to continue this correspondence, till each of us shall have advanced what may occur to us on the subject, I am,

Dear Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

BIRMINGHAM,
November, 1783.

J. PRIESTLEY.

* I find in the *General Biographical Dictionary*, under the article *Comenius*, that Zuicker wrote *three defences* of his original work, entitled, *Irenicon Irenicorum*, in answer to Comenius; and that bishop Bull was accused by D. Crellius of not having read those pieces, for want of which he censured Zuicker for some things which he otherwise would not have objected to him.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

IN this Postscript, besides adding a few notes and observations relating to the subject of the preceding letters, I shall insert a few larger articles, that respect the controversy in general.

I.

The original extracts from Origen's works referred to, p. 19, 20, are the following :

The old Latin Version.

Et cum videris eos qui ex Judæis crediderunt in Jesum, aliquando quidem ex Maria et Joseph cum esse putantes; aliquando autem de sola Maria et spiritu sancto, videbis, &c. In Matt. Tract. 13, Opera Latine, vol. ii. p. 88.

The Greek of Huetius's edition.

Και επαν ιδης των απο Ιουδαιων πιστευοντων εις τον Ιησουν την περι τε σωτηρος πισιν, οτε μεν εκ μαριας κ' τε Ιωσην σιουμეტων αυτον ειναι, οτε μεν εκ μαριας μεν μονης κ' τε θεις πνευματι, κ' μην κ' μελα της περι αυτου θεολογιας, οφει, &c. Comment in Matt. Ed. Huetii, vol. i. p. 427.

The passage referred to, p. 21.

Ζητω ει δυνασαι πολλες μεν ειπειν επιτιμωντας ινασιωπητη τω εβιωναιω κ' πλωχευιρι περι την εις Ιησου πισιν, τας απο τω εβρων, οι τινες παρ ολιγας απαντες απιστευκατι αυτον εκ παρθενικης γεγενηθαι. Ibid. p. 428.

II.

Of Heresy in early times.

P. 33. That Irenæus did not mean to pass a sentence of what we should now call *damnation* upon the Ebionites is, I think, evident from what he says concerning them in the 21st chap. of his third book, and which has the appearance of great harshness. "If they persist," he says, "in their error, "not receiving the word of incorruption, they "continue in mortal flesh, and are subject to death, "not receiving the antidote of life*." The idea of this writer, and that of the Fathers in general, was that Christ recovered for man that immortality which Adam had lost; so that without his interference the whole race of mankind must have perished in the grave. This he represents as the punishment of the Ebionites. But he certainly could not mean that the Ebionites, *as such*, should continue in the grave, while all the rest of mankind should rise from the dead. He must, therefore, have meant, not that they in particular, but that mankind in general, could have had no resurrection, if their doctrine had been true.

P. 34. Clemens Alexandrinus makes frequent mention of *heresies*. Almost the whole of his seventh book of *Stromata*, relates to that subject. He

* Non recipientes verbum incorruptionis perseverant in carne mortali, et sunt debitores mortis, antidotum vitæ non accipientes. Lib. 3, cap. 21, p. 248.

mentions

mentions fourteen different heresiarchs by name, and ten heresies by character; but none of them bear any relation to the Ebionites, or any species of unitarians, all of them respecting Gnostics only. He particularly speaks of the *pride* of heretics in general, in pretending to deep science; whereas the Ebionites were always described in a very different manner, and were generally treated with contempt, as well as abhorrence. On the other hand, Whitby says, that this writer speaks of the doctrine of the Logos being emitted from the Father at pleasure, and recalled into him again, (which Justin Martyr mentions, and which was hardly different from proper unitarianism, being the doctrine of Noetus, Praxeas, Sabellius, and Marcellus of Ancyra) with approbation. He also says it is particularly remarkable, that Justin Martyr, though he did not approve of this doctrine, passes it without any censure, or mark of heresy*.

P. 34. I have not been able to find any particular account of this *excommunication of the Ebionites by the Fathers*, mentioned by Jerom; but I think it very possible, that it might have been nothing more than what was done by Victor, bishop of Rome, when he excommunicated all the Eastern churches (of whom the Ebionites were the chief) because they observed the Jewish rules in fixing the time of Easter; so that in this

* Sententiam hanc, quam post Noetum et Praxeam, Sabellius propugnavit, Clementi Alexandrino ex pædagogia sua placuisse non sine ratione existimo. Disquisitiones Modestæ, p. 173.

excommunication no mention might be made of any other tenet or custom of theirs, besides this instance of their obstinate adherence to Judaism. The rule laid down by Victor was afterwards confirmed by the council of Nice, but I believe without any sentence of excommunication on those who did not conform to it. If any person will give me any more light with respect to this subject, I shall be truly thankful for it.

III.

On the conduct of the Apostles, p. 53.

To these observations I would add, that as among the twelve apostles, there must have been men of very different tempers and abilities, it is not probable that they should all have agreed in conducting themselves upon the plan, of not divulging the doctrine of the divinity of their master, till their hearers were sufficiently persuaded of his messiahship. Some of them would hardly have been capable of so much refinement, and they would certainly have differed about the *time* when it was proper to divulge so great a secret. Besides, the mother of Jesus, and many other persons, of both sexes, must have been acquainted with it. For that this secret was strictly confined to the *twelve Apostles*, will hardly be maintained. And yet we have no account either of their instructions to act in this manner, or of any difference of opinion, or of conduct, with respect to it.

It

It might have been expected also, that the information that a person whom they first conversed with as a *man*, was either God himself, or the maker of the world under God, should have been received with some degree of doubt and hesitation by some or other of them ; especially as they had been so very hard to be persuaded of the truth of his resurrection, though they had been so fully apprized of it before hand. And yet, in all the history of the apostles, there is the same profound silence concerning this circumstance, and every other depending on the whole scheme, as if no such thing had ever had any existence, but in the imaginations of Athanasius, Chrysostom, and those other Fathers who maintained it ; which I therefore believe to have been the case, and that they invented this hypothesis, in order to account for the *early rise* and *general spread* of the unitarian doctrine, which they could not deny, and of which it may therefore be considered as very good evidence.

IV.

Of the excommunication of Theodotus by Victor.

It may be objected to the evidence of Tertulian concerning the *major part* of christians being unitarians, that about the same time Victor, bishop of Rome, excommunicated Theodotus of Byzantium for denying the divinity of Christ ; which it may be thought he would not have ventured to do, if the popular prejudices had not
been

been with him in this business. I do not think, however, that there is any contrariety between these two facts, when the circumstances attending them are duly considered.

Tertullian lived in Africa, where there seems to have been a greater inclination for the unitarian doctrine than there was at Rome, as we may collect from the remarkable popularity of Sabellius in that country, and other circumstances. Athanasius also, who complains of many persons of low understanding favouring the same principles, was of the same country, residing chiefly in Egypt; though he had seen a great part of the christian world, and was no doubt well acquainted with it*.

We should likewise consider the peculiarly violent character of Victor, who was capable of doing what few other persons would have attempted;

* I think it very probable that in the Western parts of the Roman empire in general, there were always fewer unitarians than in the Eastern parts; because the gospel was not preached so early in the Western parts, perhaps not to any great extent till the greater part of the clergy were infected with platonism. This might have been the case, especially in so remote a country as Gaul, where Irenæus resided, and may account for his treating the doctrine of the Ebionites with more severity than Justin, who lived in the East, where they were more numerous. On the same principles we may account for the prevalence of Arianism in all the barbarous nations bordering on the Roman empire. They had been converted to christianity chiefly by persecuted Arians. But Arianism was at length suppressed by the influence of the church of Rome, which also began to excommunicate the proper unitarians, in the person of Theodotus.

being

being the same person who excommunicated all the Eastern churches, because they did not observe Easter at the same time that the Western churches did; for which he was much censured, even by many bishops in the West.

Such an excommunication as this of Theodotus was by no means the same thing with cutting a person off from communion with any particular church, with which he had been used to communicate. Theodotus was a stranger at Rome, and it is very possible that the body of the christian church at Rome did not interest themselves in the affair; the bishop, and his clergy, only approving of it. For I readily grant that, though there were some learned unitarians in all the early ages of christianity, the majority of the clergy were not so.

Theodotus, besides being a stranger at Rome, was a man of science, and is said by the unitarians to have been well received by Victor at first; so that it is very possible that the latter might have been instigated to what he did by some quarrel between them, of which we have no account.

Upon the whole, therefore, though Victor excommunicated this Theodotus, who was a stranger, and had perhaps made himself conspicuous, so as to have given some cause of umbrage or jealousy to him, it is very possible that a great proportion of the lower kind of people, who made no noise or disturbance, might continue in communion with

with that church, though they were known to be unitarians.

I am not disposed to take any advantage of Dr. Horsley's supposition, that Theodotus might hold the unitarian doctrine in some more offensive form than that of the ancient Ebionites, and therefore might be more liable to excommunication; because both Tertullian and Theodoret say that he believed the miraculous conception, and it is only Epiphanius (who lived long after the time of Tertullian) who asserts the contrary*. It is, indeed, pretty certain that the opinion of Jesus being the son of Joseph began soon to give way early to the authority of the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and that it became extinct long before the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ.

V.

Of Justin Martyr's account of the knowledge of some christians of low rank.

It is likewise said that the testimony of Tertullian is expressly contradicted by Justin Martyr†, who in giving an account of the circumstances in which the platonic philosophy agreed, as he thought, with the doctrine of Moses, but with respect to which he supposed that Plato had borrowed from Moses, mentions the following particulars, viz. "the power which

* Tillamont's Memoirs, vol. vii. p. 116.

† Edit. Thrilby, p. 88.

" was

“ was after the first God, or the Logos,” assuming the figure of a cross in the universe, borrowed from the fixing up of a serpent (which represented Christ) in the form of a cross in the wilderness; and a third principle, borrowed from the *spirit* which Moses said moved on the face of the water at the creation; and also the notion of some fire, or conflagration, borrowed from some figurative expressions in Moses relating to the anger of God waxing hot. “ These things,” he says, “ we do not borrow from others, but all others “ from us. With us you may hear and learn “ these things from those who do not know the “ form of the letters, who are rude and barbarous “ of speech, but wise and understanding in mind; “ and from some who are even lame and blind ; so “ that you may be convinced that these things are “ not said by human wisdom, but by the “ power of God.”

But all that we can infer from this passage is, that these common people had learned from Moses that the world was made by the power and wisdom (or the Logos) of God; that the serpent in the wilderness represented Christ; and that there was a spirit of God that moved on the face of the waters; in short, that these plain people had been at the source from which Plato had borrowed his philosophy. It is by no means an explicit declaration that these common people thought that the Logos, and the spirit, were persons distinct from God. Justin was not writing
with

with a view to that question, as Tertullian was ; but only meant to say how much more knowledge was to be found among the lowest of the christians than among the wisest of the heathen philosophers.

Besides, Justin is here *boasting* of the knowledge of these lower people, and it favoured his purpose to make it as considerable as he could ; whereas Tertullian is *complaining* of the circumstance which he mentions, so that nothing but the conviction of a disagreeable truth could have extorted it from him. The same was the case with respect to Athanasius.

That the common people in Justin's time should understand his doctrine concerning the personification of the Logos is, in itself, highly improbable. That this Logos, which was originally in God the same thing that *reason* is in man, should at the creation of the world assume a proper *personality*, and afterwards animate the body of Jesus Christ, either in addition to a human soul, or instead of it, is not only very absurd, but also so very *abstruse*, that it is in the highest degree improbable, *a priori*, that the common people should have adopted it. The scriptures, in which they were chiefly conversant, could never teach them any such thing, and they could not have been capable of entering into the philosophical refinements of Justin on the subject. Whereas, that the common people should have
believed

believed as Tertullian and Athanasius represent them to have done, viz. that there is but one God; and that Christ was a man, the messenger or prophet of God, and no *second God* at all, the rival as it were of the first God, is a thing highly credible in itself, and therefore requires less external evidence.

VI.

Of the passage in Justin Martyr concerning the Unitarians of his time.*

I think myself possessed of so much evidence in favour of the unitarian doctrine having been maintained in the first ages of christianity, that I have no occasion to be solicitous about trifles with respect to it; and even with regard to the much-contested

* Καὶ γὰρ εἰσι τινες, ἀπο τοῦ ἡμετέρου γένους ομολογῶντες αὐτὸν Χρῆστον εἶναι, ἀνθρώπων δὲ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, γενομένων ἀποβαίνοντες· οἷς ἔστιν ἐκείναι, ὥς ἂν πλείους ταῦτα μοι δοξασάντες εἰπόμεν, ἐπειδὴ ἐκ ἀνθρωπείοις διδασχμασι κεκλευσμένα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χρῆστου πεισθεῖναι, ἀλλὰ τοῖς διατῶν μακαρίων προφητῶν κηρυχθεῖσι, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ διδασχθεῖσι.
Edit. Thirlby, p. 234.

Thus rendered by my opponent the Monthly Reviewer.

There are some of our profession who acknowledge him to be the Christ, and yet maintain that he was a man born in the natural way; to whom I could not yield my assent, no not even if the majority of christians should think the same; because we are commanded by Christ himself not to rely on human doctrines, but to receive those which were published by the blessed prophets, and which he himself taught us.

contested passage in Justin Martyr, above referred to, and of which I made some use in my late *History*, vol. i. p. 17, it is quite sufficient for my purpose that the writer here speaks of unitarians with tenderness, and is far from treating them as *heretics*; and in this I think every reasonable man, who considers the manner in which this writer speaks of *heretics in general* (on which occasion he specifies none but Gnostics) will agree with me. If any person think otherwise, I have nothing farther to say, and our readers must judge between us.

I cannot help thinking, however, with my learned *Vindicator*, that this passage more critically examined, furnishes a still stronger evidence in favour of the prevalence of the unitarian doctrine in the time of Justin.

1. Let it be considered that, in this place, as well as in his writings in general, he *labours* the proof of the pre-existence of Christ, shewing that it is consonant to the principles of Platonism, and

By my *Vindicator*, more literally.

There are some of our race [viz. Gentiles] who acknowledge him to be the Christ, and yet maintain that he was a man born in the natural way, to whom I do not assent, though the majority may have told me that they had been of the same opinion, &c.

Some conjecture that the original reading was *υμῶν*, instead of *ἡμῶν*; and then it should be rendered some of *your race*, meaning the Jewish christians. But there is no authority for this from any manuscript.

also

also deducible from the writings of Moses, and other parts of the Jewish scriptures, without referring to any other writer in support of what he advances.

2. He does not use a single acrimonious expression against those who differed from him with respect to it; which is just as any man would do who should write in defence of a novel, or not very prevalent opinion, and one, of which himself was the principal abettor. He even provides a retreat in case he should not be able to prove his point; saying that, though he should fail in this, it would not follow that he was mistaken in the other; for that still Jesus might be the Messiah (which was evidently a matter of the first consequence with him) though he should be nothing more than a man.

3. He talks of not being overborne by the authority of any number of men, even his fellow christians, but would adhere to the words of Christ, and the sense of scripture; which is a style almost peculiar to those whose opinions are either quite novel, or at least not very prevalent.

4. The phrase "neither do I agree with the majority of christians, who may have objected to my opinion," which is nearly the most literal rendering of the passage (though I would not be understood to lay much stress on that circumstance, will naturally be construed to mean

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that

that the majority actually *did* make the objection, or that Justin suspected they *might* make it.

When I consider these circumstances, and also how apt all persons are to make their own party more numerous than it really is, I am inclined to think that, even if the passage might bear such a construction as that Justin meant to insinuate that the majority were with him, yet that it would not be the most natural construction, or a sufficient authority to conclude that such was the fact. I therefore think that, upon the whole, the passage has all the *appearance of an apology* (which is all that I have asserted) for an opinion different from that which in his time was commonly received on the subject.

I am, no doubt, influenced in my construction of this particular passage, by the persuasion that I have, from other independent evidence, that the unitarians were, in fact, the majority of christians in the time of Justin; that he therefore knew this to be the case, and could not mean to insinuate the contrary. Another person, having a different persuasion concerning the state of opinions in that age, will naturally be inclined to put a different construction upon this passage. In this case I only wish that he would suspend his judgment till he has attended to my other arguments; and afterwards he may perhaps see this passage in the same light in which I do.

The

The word γενεα, I think with my learned friend, refers to *natural descent*; and I therefore conclude that Justin here meant not christians in general, but gentile christians in particular; because, as he is opposing the opinion concerning Christ, which made him to be *a man born of men*, not to the doctrine of the *miraculous conception*, but only to his *pre-existence*, the only idea that he had in his mind, and to which he attended, was that of his *simple humanity*; and we have positive evidence that this was the doctrine of *all* the Jewish christians, so that he could not speak of some of them holding it and others not. Whereas the gentile christians were divided on that subject; and some of them even later than this, viz. in the time of Origen, held that in the strictest sense of the expression, Jesus was a man born of man, being the son of Joseph as well as of Mary. I therefore think that Justin meant the gentile christians, omitting the Jewish christians, whose sentiments he might suppose to have been well known to the learned Jew, with whom he was conversing.

Tillemont some where says that the majority of the Ebionites, seem to have believed that Christ was the son of Joseph; and as I find no mention of *two sorts* of Ebionites (one of them believing the miraculous conception and the other not) before the time of Origen; it is probable that in the time of Justin the Jewish christians were almost wholly Ebionites of the oldest denomination,

tion, believing Christ to be man born of man, in the strictest sense of the phrase; and therefore that, in this respect also, there could have been no pretence for any insinuation that the jewish christians were divided on this point; and still less, that those among them who believed Jesus to be a man born of man, were not a very great majority of them.

It is plain from the existence of such christians, both among Jews and Gentiles, in the time of Origen, and probably much later, which was long after the publication of the gospels of Matthew and Luke, even in their present form (admitting that there might be some doubt relating to the introductions to them, when they were first published) that they considered these evangelists simply as *historians*, and by no means as inspired writers; so that they thought themselves at liberty to admit or disregard their testimony to particular facts, according to their opinion of their evidence being competent, or not competent, in those particular cases. I have frequently avowed myself not to be a believer in the inspiration of the evangelists and apostles *as writers*, and have given my reasons pretty much at large for my opinion. I therefore, with these ancient unitarians, hold this subject of the miraculous conception to be one, with respect to which any person is fully at liberty to think as the evidence shall appear to him, without any impeachment of his faith or character as a christian.

I shall

I shall conclude this article with observing that, without attending to minute criticisms, it is quite sufficient for my purpose, that these ancient unitarian christians, whether they held the miraculous conception or not, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, or whether Justin meant to represent them as strictly speaking the majority of christians or otherwise, were not treated by him *as heretics*. From this circumstance alone it may be concluded, that they were very numerous; because whenever unitarians have not been very numerous, and made a respectable figure among christians, they have always been considered with great abhorrence, and have been cut off from communion with those of the orthodox persuasion.

With what rancour does Eusebius treat this class of christians, both in his history, and in his treatise against Marcellus of Ancyra; when we know, from Athanasius and other authorities, that they were, at that time very numerous (though among the lower classes of people) and probably in all parts of the christian world.

When these things are duly considered, it can hardly be imagined but that, let this passage in Justin be construed in any manner that the words can possibly bear, it will be sufficiently to my purpose, and authorize all the use that I have made of it. But I can very well spare the passage altogether; thinking that I have evidence enough of my general position without it. After all the attention

which I have given to this subject, I see no material objection to the manner in which I have expressed myself concerning it in my History. If, however, there should be a demand for a new edition of that work, I shall endeavour to make it as little exceptionable as possible, consistent with my own real opinion.

VII.

Of the first author of the doctrine of the permanent personality of the Logos.

I have given a good deal of attention to this subject, and from a careful perusal of a considerable part of Justin Martyr's writings, I think it very probable that he was either the first, or one of the first, who advanced the doctrine of the permanent personality of the Logos. I think he writes as if this was the case; but I wish that some other person would give his works a more careful perusal with that particular view. He was probably the oldest of the authorities quoted by the anonymous writer referred to by Eusebius, as the Clemens mentioned along with him, was probably not Clemens Romanus, but Clemens Alexandrinus, who was later than Justin Martyr. Had there been any pretence for quoting Hegesippus as a maintainer of the divinity of Christ, he would certainly have been mentioned in preference to Justin Martyr, or any others in the list; not only because he was an earlier writer, but chiefly because he was one of the Jewish christians, who are well known not to have favoured that opinion.

As

As to the *hymns* used by christians, and said to have been *from the beginning* (απαρχῆς) by those who were friends to the supposed doctrine of them, no inference can safely be drawn from them; because *divinity* may be ascribed to persons in very different senses, and some of them very innocent ones; and as to their *antiquity*, it is very possible, for any thing that appears to the contrary, that they might have been those very hymns which were rejected by Paulus Samosatensis on account of their *novelty*,

VIII.

Maxims of historical criticism.

Though the maxims of historical criticism are things that are well understood by all persons who attend to them (and indeed, as they are the ultimate principles of all reasoning on these subjects, it would otherwise be in vain to appeal to them at all) it may not be unuseful to enumerate them, and to illustrate such of them as may seem to require it. Things of a similar nature have been done by all mathematicians and critics. By the former these ultimate propositions are called *axioms*, and by the latter *canons of criticism*; and as I wish to reduce the species of criticism with which I and my opponents are now conversant, to the greatest certainty, I have followed their example. I have, however, made no general system, but have only noted such particulars as I myself have had occasion for; and even this I am far from pretending to have executed with perfect accuracy; but I give it as a *sketch*, to be ex-

amined at leisure, and to be rectified where it shall appear to be requisite.

These maxims are adapted to the following *summary view* of those arguments, which I apprehend establish my principal position, viz. that the christian church was originally unitarian; and therefore I have annexed to each of them the number of that article in the *summary view* to which they correspond, that they may be compared together. I wish that Dr. Horsley, and other trinitarians, would in like manner reduce into axioms the principles on which they proceed, that they may be compared with mine; and perhaps we may by this means be assisted in coming to a proper issue in this controversy. If my opponents will devise any other method that shall appear to be better adapted to gain the same desirable end, I shall heartily concur in it, and conform to it.

1.

When two persons give different accounts of things, that evidence is to be preferred, which is either in itself more probable, or more agreeable to other credible testimony.

2.

Neither is entire credit to be given to any set of men with respect to what is reputable to them, nor to their enemies with respect to what is disreputable; but the account given by the one may be balanced by that of the other. Summary View, No. 10.

3.

Accounts of any set of men given by their enemies only are always suspicious. But the confessions of enemies, and circumstances favourable to any body of men, collected from the writings of their adversaries, are deserving of particular regard.

4.

It is more natural for men who wish to speak disparagingly of any sect to undervalue their numbers, as well as every thing else relating to them; and it is equally natural for those who wish to speak respectfully of any party, to represent the members of it as more numerous than they are. Summary View, No. 13.

5.

When persons form themselves into societies, so as to be distinguishable from others, they never fail to get some *particular name*, either assumed by themselves, or imposed by others. This is necessary in order to make them the subject of conversation, long periphrases in discourse being very inconvenient. Summary View, No. 8.

6.

When particular opinions are ascribed to a particular class of men, without any distinction of the time when those opinions were adopted by them, it may be presumed, that they were supposed to hold those opinions from the time that they received their denomination. Summary View, No. 4.

7. When

7.

When a particular description is given of a class of persons within any period of time, any person who can be proved to have the proper character of one of that class, may be deemed to have belonged to it, and to have enjoyed all the privileges of it, whatever they were. Summary View, No. 9.

8.

When an historian, or writer of any kind, professedly enumerates the several *species* belonging to any *genus*, or general body of men, and omits any particular species, or denomination, which, if it had belonged to the genus, he, from his situation and circumstances, was not likely to have overlooked, it may be presumed that he did not consider that particular species as belonging to the genus. Summary View, No. 7.

9.

Great changes in opinion are not usually made of a sudden, and never by great bodies of men. That history, therefore, which represents such changes as having been made gradually, and by easy steps, is always the more probable on that account. Summary View, No. 16.

10.

The common or unlearned people, in any country, who do not speculate much, retain longest any opinions with which their minds have been much impressed; and therefore we always look for the oldest opinions in any country, or any class of men,
among

among the common people, and not among the learned. Summary View, No. 13, 14.

11.

If any new opinions be introduced into a society, they are most likely to have introduced them, who held opinions similar to them before they joined that society. Summary View, No. 15.

12.

If any particular opinion has never failed to excite great indignation in all ages and nations, where a contrary opinion has been generally received, and that particular opinion can be proved to have existed in any age or country when it did not excite indignation, it may be concluded that it had many partizans in that age or country. For the opinion being the same, it could not of itself be more respectable; and human nature being the same, it could not but have been regarded in the same light, so long as the same stress was laid on the opposite opinion. Summary View, No. 1. 11, 12.

13.

When a time is given, in which any very remarkable and interesting opinion was not believed by a certain class of people, and another time in which the belief of it was general, the introduction of such an opinion may always be known by the effects which it will produce upon the minds, and in the conduct of men; by the alarm which it will give to some, and the defence of it by others.

others. — If, therefore, no alarm was given, and no defence of it was made within any particular period, it may be concluded that the introduction of it did not take place within that period. Summary View, No. 2, 3. 6.

14.

When any particular opinion or practice, is necessarily or customarily accompanied by any other opinion or practice; if the latter be not found within any particular period, it may be presumed that the former did not exist within that period. Summary View, No. 5.

IX.

A summary view of the evidence for the primitive christians having held the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ.

1. It is acknowledged by early writers of the orthodox persuasion, that two kinds of heresy existed in the times of the apostles, viz. that of those who held that Christ was simply a man; and that of the Gnostics; of whom some believed that Christ was man only in appearance, and others that it was only *Jesus*, and not the *Christ* (a pre-existent spirit who descended from heaven and dwelt in him) that suffered on the cross. Now the apostle John animadverts with the greatest severity upon the latter, but makes no mention of the former; and can it be thought probable

probable that he would pass it without censure, if he had thought it to be an error; considering how great, and how dangerous an error it has always been thought by those who have considered it as being an error at all? Maxim 12.

2. The great objection that Jews have always made to christianity in its present state is, that it enjoins the worship of more gods than one; and it is a great article with the christian writers of the second and following centuries to answer this objection. But it does not appear in all the book of Acts, in which we hear much of the cavils of the Jews, both in Jerusalem and in many parts of the Roman empire, that they made any such objection to christianity *then*; nor do the apostles, either there, or in their epistles, advance any thing with a view to such an objection. It may be presumed, therefore, that no such offence to the Jews had then been given, by the preaching of a doctrine so offensive to them as that of the divinity of Christ must have been. Maxim 12. 13.

3. As no Jew had originally any idea of their Messiah being more than a man, and as the apostles and the first christians had certainly the same idea at first concerning Jesus, it may be supposed, that, if ever they had been informed that Jesus was not a man, but either God himself, or the maker of the world under God, we should have been able to trace the *time* and the *circumstances* in which so great a discovery was made to them; and

and that we should have perceived the effect which it had upon their minds ; at least by some change in their manner of speaking concerning him. But nothing of this kind is to be found in the gospels, in the book of Acts, or in any of the epistles. We perceive marks enow of other new views of things, especially of the call of the Gentiles to partake of the privileges of the gospel ; and we hear much of the disputes and the eager contention which it occasioned. But how much more must all their prejudices have been shocked by the information that a person whom they first took to be *a mere man*, was not a man, but either God himself, or the maker of the world under God ? Maxim 13.

4. All the Jewish christians, after the destruction of Jerusalem, which was immediately after the age of the apostles, are said to have been *Ebionites* ; and these were only of two sorts, some of them holding the miraculous conception of our Saviour, and others believing that he was the son of Joseph as well as of Mary. None of them are said to have believed either that he was God, or the maker of the world under God. And is it at all credible that the body of the Jewish christians, if they had ever been instructed by the apostles in the doctrine of the divinity, or pre-existence of Christ, would so soon, and so generally, if not universally, have abandoned that faith ? Maxim 6.

5. Had Christ been considered as God, or the maker of the world under God, in the early ages of
the

the church, he would naturally have been the proper object of prayer to christians; nay, more so than God the Father, with whom, on the scheme of the doctrine of the trinity, they must have known that they had less immediate intercourse. But prayers to Jesus Christ were not used in early times, but gained ground gradually, with the opinion of Christ being God, and the object of worship. Maxim 14.

6. Athanasius represents the apostles as obliged to use great caution not to offend their first converts with the doctrine of Christ's divinity, and as forbearing to urge that topic till they were first well established in a belief of his being the Messiah. He adds, that the Jews being in an error on this subject, drew the Gentiles into it. Chrysostom agrees with Athanasius in this representation of the silence of the apostles in their first preaching, both with respect to the divinity of Christ, and his miraculous conception. They both represent them as leaving their disciples to learn the doctrine of Christ's divinity, by way of *inference* from certain expressions; and they do not pretend to produce any instance in which they taught that doctrine clearly and explicitly. Maxim 13.

7. Hegefippus, the first christian historian, himself a Jew, and therefore probably an Ebionite, enumerating the heresies of his time, mentions several of the Gnostic kind, but not that of Christ being a mere man. He moreover says, that in travelling to Rome, where he arrived in the time of Anicetus, he

he found all the churches that he visited held the faith which had been taught by Christ and the apostles, which, in his opinion, was probably that of Christ being not God, but man only. Justin Martyr also, and Clemens Alexandrinus, who wrote after Hegesippus, treat largely of heresies in general, without mentioning, or alluding to, the unitarians. Maxim 8.

8. All those who were deemed heretics in early times, were cut off from the communion of those who called themselves the *orthodox* christians, and went by some particular name; generally that of their leader. But the unitarians among the gentiles were not expelled from the assemblies of christians, but worshipped along with those who were called orthodox, and had no particular name till the time of Victor, who excommunicated Theodotus; and a long time after that Epiphanius endeavoured to give them the name of Alogi. And though the Ebionites, probably about or before this time, had been excommunicated by the Gentile christians, it was, as Jerom says, *only* on account of their rigid adherence to the law of Moses. Maxim 5.

9. The *Apostles creed* is that which was taught to all catechumens before baptism, and additions were made to it from time to time, in order to exclude those who were denominated *heretics*. Now, though there are several articles in that creed which allude to the Gnostics, and tacitly condemn them, there was not, in the time of Tertullian, any article in it that

that alluded to the unitarians ; so that even then any unitarian, at least one believing the miraculous conception, might have subscribed it. It may, therefore, be concluded, that simple unitarianism was not deemed heretical at the end of the second century. Maxim 7.

10. It is acknowledged by Eusebius and others, that the ancient unitarians themselves, constantly asserted that their doctrine was the prevailing opinion of the christian church till the time of Victor. Maxim 2.

11. Justin Martyr, who maintains the pre-existence of Christ, is so far from calling the contrary opinion a *heresy*, that what he says on the subject is evidently an apology for his own : and when he speaks of *heretics in general*, which he does with great indignation, as no christians, and having no communication with christians, he mentions the Gnostics only. Maxim 12.

12. Irenæus, who was after Justin, and who wrote a large treatise on the subject of heresy, says very little concerning the Ebionites. Those Ebionites he speaks of as believing that Christ was the son of Joseph, and he makes no mention of those who believed the miraculous conception. Maxim 12.

13. Tertullian represents the majority of the common or unlearned christians, the *Idiotæ*, as unitarians ;

tarians ; and it is among the common people that we always find the oldest opinions in any country, and in any sect, while the learned are most apt to innovate. It may therefore be presumed that, as the unitarian doctrine was held by the common people in the time of Tertullian, it had been more general still before that time, and probably universal in the apostolical age. Athanasius also mentions it as a subject of complaint to the orthodox of his age that *the many*, and especially, persons of *low understandings*, were inclined to the unitarian doctrine. Maxim 4. 10.

14. The first who held and discussed the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, acknowledged that their opinions were exceedingly unpopular among the unlearned christians ; that these dreaded the doctrine of the trinity, thinking that it infringed upon the doctrine of the supremacy of God the Father ; and the learned christians make frequent apologies to them, and to others, for their own opinion. Maxim 10.

15. The divinity of Christ was first advanced and urged by those who had been heathen philosophers, and especially those who were admirers of the doctrine of Plato, who held the opinion of a *second* God. Austin says, that he considered Christ as no other than a most excellent man, and had no suspicion of the word of God being incarnate in him, or how “ the catholic faith differed from the “ error of Photinus” (the last of the proper unitarians

rians whose name is come down to us) till he read the books of Plato ; and that he was afterwards confirmed in the Catholic doctrine by reading the scriptures. Constantine in his oration to the fathers of the council of Nice, speaks with commendation of Plato, as having taught the doctrine of “ a second God, derived from the supreme God, and subservient to his will.” Maxim i i.

16. There is a pretty easy gradation in the progress of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ ; as he was first thought to be a God in some qualified sense of the word, a distinguished emanation from the supreme mind ; and then the Logos, or the wisdom of God personified ; and this *logos* was first thought to be only occasionally detached from the Deity, and then drawn into his essence again, before it was imagined that it had a *permanent personality*, distinct from that of the source from which it sprung. And it was not till 400 years after that time that this *logos*, or Christ, was thought to be properly equal to the Father. Whereas, on the other hand, it is now pretended that the apostles taught the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, yet it cannot be denied that in the very times of the apostles, the Jewish church, and many of the Gentiles also, held the opinion of his being a mere man. Here the transition is quite sudden, without any gradation at all. This must naturally have given the greatest alarm, such as is now given to those who are called orthodox, by the present Socinians ; and yet nothing of this kind can be perceived. Besides, it is cer-

tainly most probable that the christians of those times, urged as they were with the meanness of their master, should incline to *add to*, rather than *take from*, his natural rank and dignity. Maxim 9.

X.

Remarks on the article of the Monthly Review for September, 1783, in answer to my REPLY to some former animadversions in that work.

A writer in the *Monthly Review* having made an elaborate answer to my *Reply* to his former animadversions on my history, it will be expected that I take some notice of it. On its own account I certainly should not have thought it necessary, any more than I should with respect to his former remarks. But being written in a specious and imposing manner, as the former were ; and especially having the advantage of going without expence into the hands of almost all readers, I shall notice an article or two in it, in which he himself evidently thinks that he has the most advantage, and only give my opinion in general with respect to the rest.

As to the *temper* with which this controversy has been conducted, I appeal to our readers, whether my *Reply* was not *candid* and *temperate*, beyond what his first remarks were entitled to ; and whether his answer be not extremely *uncandid* and *insolent*. I do not pretend to be a judge in my own cause. I know, however, that, whereas he supposes I used the term *criticiser* by way of contempt, I only used

it for the sake of variety, instead of *critic, reviewer, &c.* meaning simply *one that criticises.*

After quoting a passage from Justin Martyr, I added, " This language has all the appearance of
 " an apology for an opinion contrary to the general
 " and prevailing one ; as that of the humanity of
 " Christ (at least with the belief of the miraculous
 " conception) probably was in his time." This the
 Reviewer called a *very great inconsistency.* " The
 " Doctor," he says, " has no right to insert his *at*
 " *least with the belief of a miraculous conception.* The
 " insertion is entirely arbitrary ; and those who
 " know less of the author's character than we do,
 " and may not have the same well-grounded assur-
 " ance of his integrity, may possibly be led to ima-
 " gine, that he introduced those words only to give
 " some colourable pretext to his own principles."

This I scrupled not to call a *groundless and per-verse misrepresentation* of my meaning ; that part of the sentence in which mention is made of the *miraculous conception* being expressive of an opinion of my own, and for which I make myself only answerable. The sentence is therefore perfectly unexceptionable, and very far from giving just cause for such an alarming exclamation as the Reviewer makes use of.

This, however, he has the assurance to defend ; and, confident of his advantage in the argument, he even quotes the whole section in my Reply

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relating to this subject; and then says, p. 244,
 “ We carefully revited what we had written, and
 “ as carefully compared it with the passage in
 “ Dr. Priestley’s History which occasioned the re-
 “ flection we make. The revisal, instead of con-
 “ vincing us that we had misconceived or mis-
 “ represented Dr. Priestley’s meaning, fully con-
 “ vinced us that we had done neither; and we
 “ now a second time repeat what Dr. Priestley has
 “ been pleased to call an almost unparalleled
 “ instance of groundless and perverse misrepresent-
 “ ation.” He rests his vindication on that part of
 the sentence, in which mention is made of the
 miraculous conception, being an *inference* from the
 passage in Justin. “ *As such,*” he now says, p. 244,
 “ we found fault with it.”

Now I assert, as I did in my *Reply*, that this clause
 is *no inference* at all, but an independent observation
 of my own, in support of my inference, or rather
 of part of it only; and if it be otherwise, I profess
 that I have no knowledge of language, and that I
 am not able to express my own meaning. If I un-
 derstand myself, the whole sentence may be para-
 phrased as follows. “ What Justin here advances
 “ appears to me to have the air of an apology for
 “ an opinion of his own, different from that of the
 “ majority of christians in his time. The opinion
 “ which he mentions as not his own is, that Christ
 “ was a mere man, and even the son of Joseph as
 “ well as of Mary. Now I will not venture to say
 “ that this opinion was more prevalent than that
 “ of

“ of Justin ; but if we add to those who held this
 “ opinion, those who believing Christ to be a mere
 “ man, held that he had no human father, I think
 “ it probable that those two classes of christians ta-
 “ ken together were more numerous than those
 “ who, with Justin Martyr, held the doctrine of
 “ Christ’s pre-existence.”

This, I will venture to say, no person can doubt was my real meaning ; and though it is concisely, it is not, I think, obscurely expressed. With a person who can misunderstand so plain a sentence, consisting of no more than two members ; and persist in his misconstruction, after its being particularly pointed out to him, and his professing to have given all due attention to it ; and also with one who can think it natural (as he does, p. 228) that Tertullian, or any man, would represent his opponents as more numerous than they really were, in order to express his *contempt* of them ; it is absolutely impossible for me to hold any argument. We want common language and common principles. It is, as the Reviewer says, to bring the question to an issue *at once*. We have nothing more to say, and our judges must decide between us.

He cannot express his confidence more strongly than he has done ; and to what I have already said, I will now add, that I not only think he has misrepresented my meaning ; but that, considering all the circumstances, and especially his persisting in it, as he now does, it will not be easy to produce any mis-

representation of a writer's meaning so groundless and so perverse as this, in any controversial writing. And yet, though this case is so clear, that I might safely appeal to any person who understands English, it is very possible that, instead of any *kissing of the rod*, which he promised, or any other answer, he will quote all that I have now written, and repeat his accusation a third time.

I shall now consider another article on which the Reviewer lays great stress, and which is the first part of his answer to my Reply. It is what he calls his *strong reason* for some material, but unknown difference between the Ebionites and the Nazarenes; and it seems that we both of us have the same authority for our very different opinions on this subject. "It is somewhat singular," he says, p. 216, "that the passage to which the Doctor has sent us, by a marginal reference (for he has not quoted one word from it) should turn out to be the very passage that we intended to produce, if we should be called upon for that *strong reason* by which we were inclined to think that the members of both sects differed considerably in articles of faith, notwithstanding there was such a point of agreement between them in the outward services of religion as might in the end lead to a nearer intercourse," &c.

I shall now produce the passage, beginning a little earlier than the Reviewer has done, and then give my translation of it, which any person who understands

derstands Latin may compare with his. “ Si hoc
 “ verum est ; in Cherinti & Hebionis hæresim di-
 “ labimur, qui credentes in Christo, propter hoc
 “ solum a patribus anathematizati sunt, quod legis
 “ cærimonias Christi Evangelio miscuerunt, & sic
 “ nova confessi sunt, ut vetera non amitterent. Quid
 “ dicam de Hebionitis, qui Christianos esse se simu-
 “ lant ? Usque hodie per totas orientis synagogas
 “ inter Judeos hæresis est, quæ dicitur mineorum, &
 “ a Pharisæis nunc usque damnatur, quos vulgo
 “ Nazareos nuncupant, qui credunt in Christum,
 “ filium Dei, natum de virgine Maria, & eum di-
 “ cunt esse, qui sub Pontio Pilato passus est, & re-
 “ surrexit, in quem & nos credimus : sed dum vo-
 “ lunt & Judæi esse, & Christiani, nec Judæi sunt
 “ nec Christiani.” This I translate as follows.

“ If this be true, we fall into the heresy of Che-
 “ rintus and Ebion, who, believing in Christ, were
 “ anathematized by the fathers on this account *only*,
 “ that they mixed the ceremonies of the law with
 “ the gospel of Christ, and held to the new [dis-
 “ pensation] in such a manner, as not to lose the old.
 “ What shall I say concerning the Ebionites, who
 “ pretend that they are christians ? It is to this very
 “ day, in all the synagogues of the East, a heresy
 “ among the Jews, called that of the Minei, now
 “ condemned by the Pharisees, and commonly
 “ called Nazarenes ; who believe in Christ, the son
 “ of God, born of the virgin Mary, and say that it
 “ was he who suffered under Pontius Pilate, and
 “ rose again ; in whom also we believe. But while
 “ rose

“ they wish to be both Jews and christians, they
 “ are neither Jews nor christians.”

This, the Reviewer says, after Bishop Bull, is the *clearest testimony for a difference between the Ebionites and Nazarenes, Testimonium apertissimum*. It is indeed *apertissimum*, a testimony exceedingly open to refutation.

Can any instance be brought of a writer closing his account of a thing with saying, *What shall I say concerning it?** After such an expression as this, we naturally expect, that he should proceed to say something concerning it, which this author most evidently does; observing, that the same people who were called *Ebionites* (by the Gentiles) were called *Minei* and *Nazarenes*, by the Jews. Had he meant to describe any other class of people, he would naturally have begun his next sentence with *Est et*, or *Est alia heresis*, and not simply *heresis est*. As to his speaking of heresy in the second sentence, and not *heretics*, as in the first, it is a most trifling inaccuracy in language, the easiest of all others to fall into, and of no consequence to the meaning at all. Besides Jerom's account of these two denominations of men is exactly the same; the Ebionites being *believers in Christ*, but *mixing*

* The Reviewer translates *Quid dicam de Ebionites*, by *But why should I speak of the Ebionites*.—For, &c. Let the reader judge between us; observing, that there is nothing in the original to correspond either to his *but* or his *for*, and the more proper meaning of *quid* is *what*, and not *why*.

the law and the gospel; and the Nazarenes, *wishing to be both Jews and christians*, which certainly comes to the very same thing.

The Reviewer lays great stress on our author's saying that the Ebionites *pretended* to be christians; but in the part which is omitted by him, Jerom calls them *credentes in Christo, believers in Christ*; and if they believed in Christ at all, they could not believe much less than he himself represents the Nazarenes to have done. He may say that they only pretended to be christians, but were not, because they had been excommunicated. But what had they been excommunicated for? not for any proper imperfection of their faith in Christ, in which they were inferior to the Nazarenes, but *only (solum)* because they mixed the ceremonies of the law with the gospel of Christ; which, in other words, he asserts of the Nazarenes also, when he says they *wished to be both Jews and Christians*. And though he does not say that the Nazarenes were *excommunicated*, he says they were *not christians*, which is an expression of the same import.

This passage, the *strong reason*, the *testimonium apertissimum* of my opponent, I might have urged as decisive in favour of the identity of the Ebionites and Nazarenes; but I only said, "I also think it may be clearly inferred from it, that the Ebionites and Nazarenes were the same people." Reply, p. 4. As to the term *Minei*, it only means *Sectaries* in the Hebrew language.

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Had there been any *foreign reason* why we should suppose that Jerom meant to distinguish between the Ebionites and the Nazarenes, we might have hesitated about the interpretation of his meaning, easy as it is; but certainly there can be no cause of hesitation, when it is considered that in this he agrees not with Epiphanius only, but with the whole strain of antiquity, as is allowed by Le Clerc, and all the ablest critics; and to interpret his meaning as Dr. Bull and the Reviewer do, is to set him at variance with all other writers.

The Reviewer says, in his note, p. 216, “Why were the Cerinthians omitted?” Jerom places them with the Ebionites in the preceding sentence: and if the Nazarenes and the Ebionites were the same people, it may with equal clearness of evidence be inferred that they were the same people with the Cerinthians likewise.”

I answer, they were the same people, as far as Jerom then considered them, because they were equally zealous for the law of Moses.

I cannot help thinking that by this time the Reviewer is not disposed to lay quite so much stress on this *strong reason* as he did at first; for before he has done writing about it, he contents himself with calling it a *conjecture* only. But the conjecture is as improbable, as the *reason* was weak.

Since I wrote the above, I find that Suicer, in his *Thesaurus*, under the article *Ebion*, makes the same use

use of this passage of Jerom that I have done, and considers the Nazarenes as a branch of the Ebionites; and that the Reviewer hath been misled in his construction of this passage by Dr. Bull, of whom he, as well as Dr. Horsley, entertains a very high opinion. On the contrary, I think no writer has been more effectually answered than he has been.

What the Reviewer says of the quotation from Athanasius, and which he calls, p. 232, *something very serious indeed*, I have fully considered in my *Letters to Dr. Horsley*; and as to his quotation from Barnabas, he will find that article well explained by Mr. Lindsey in the *Sequel to his Apology*, p. 429. 'This is a work from which this writer might learn a great deal.

As to every thing else in this answer of the Reviewer, I can truly say that, after perusing it with care, I see no reason to wish that I had said any thing otherwise than I have done in my former Reply to him, except that I understood him too literally in what I observed in my fifth section. As to all the rest, I think it would be trifling with my own time, and that of my readers, to make any remarks upon it.

To shew that I do not say this merely to get rid of the business, I declare, that if any person, giving his name, shall request my attention to any particular part of it, and procure me a place
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in the *Monthly Review*, I will speak to it as fully and as explicitly as I can; and I do not think that I should require much room to give a very satisfactory answer to any article in it. I only wish for a public and impartial hearing. In the name of truth, I only say, *dos quæ sūt* *.

In the mean time, as this writer has already produced his *greatest objection* against me, p. 521, his *something very serious indeed*, p. 232, and his *strong reason*, p. 216, I hope he will not stop here, but proceed to his *stronger* and his *strongest* reason, or any other new mode of alarming the public, and of prejudicing their minds against my work, though it should require two or three more *additional sheets of letter press* for the Reviews which shall contain them. It will answer my wishes, in drawing more attention to the subject, and procure me a better hearing *in the end*; and that is all that I wish for in this argument.

As this writer affects to be restrained from saying all that he could do by his respect for me,

* For this, among other purposes, such a publication as the *Theological Repository* would be of excellent use. It was with great reluctance that I gave up that favourite scheme, but at that time the demand was not sufficient to indemnify the publisher. In such a periodical publication as this, questions might be proposed and answered, without putting the proposer, or the answerer, to any expence; and all serious enquirers after truth would have an opportunity of having any important subject fairly discussed, without any person improperly making himself both judge and party.

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I wish he would lay aside all ceremony of this kind; and in order to invite him to perfect freedom, I will add that the idea I first formed of his *learning* and *ability*, is much lessened since the perusal of his last article, and of his reply to my learned and judicious friend; and what is of more consequence, I perceive a still greater deficiency in that *candour*, and *freedom from prejudice*, without which learning and ability only serve to mislead a man, and enable him to mislead others.

I do not complain of the conduct of the Review, or the writers in it, for their late change of manner, and their leaning to the side of orthodoxy. All men are at liberty to change their opinions and their conduct, as they see reason. They have thought proper, however, to make an *apology* for their conduct with respect to myself, pretending that they only act on the *defensive*; when the first part of the review of my work was written in the spirit and manner of the most professed polemic, without the appearance of a fair review. If it could be called a review, nothing in any form could be more evidently calculated to discredit any work.

I will add, that Mr. Bewly, a considerable writer in the Monthly Review, lately dead, was exceedingly offended at the first article of the review of my work. Such conduct, he said, was highly improper in a Review, and independent of any regard to me, or to the subject (in which he did not at all interest

terest himself) he said, that from the first sight of it, he was determined to remonstrate with the Editor on account of it. What would he have said to the Review for September, in which, even with *an additional sheet of letter-press*, the answer to my small pamphlet takes up more than one third of the whole; and especially if he had seen it puffed off in an *advertisement*, drawn up for the purpose, in which no other article is specified besides this answer; and in which it is said, “the Reviewer maintains his former charges against the doctor’s work, and supports them with additional arguments, and more copious authorities.”

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

HAVING received letters from two of my learned friends relating to the subject of this work, when it was nearly printed off, I take the liberty to give extracts from them in this place; being satisfied that my readers will be pleased to see them, and hoping that the writers will not be much offended at my making this use of them, without their consent, for which it is too late to apply to them. Indeed, the former letter was intended for my use; but the latter, which is from the author of the *Remarks* in my vindication, was certainly not meant for the public eye, and was written immediately after the first reading of the review of his piece. But on this account it may be more depended upon, as expressing his real feelings.

Dear Sir,

November 5, 1783.

I have just been reading Dr. Horsley's *charge* against you, to which I doubt not you will make a proper reply. As he seems to triumph in your having, as he supposes, mistaken the sense of some Greek quotations; and as parallel passages are not always at hand, though common enough if we could wait for them till they occur; I take the liberty of sending you one that I have since met with in Demosthenes, and another from Thucydides.

In opposition to your interpretation of the beginning of John's gospel, he says, the natural force of *ὁὗτος* is *this person*. Very true, if the

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noun to which it belongs represent a person; but if the noun be only the name of a thing, then the natural force of *οὗτο* will be *this thing*, as appears from the following passage from Demosthenes, 1st Olynthiac, *Νυνὶ δὲ καὶ οὗτο ηὐτίς ἐστὶν; ὁ τῶν Οὐλυνθίων ἀντοματόν τῃ πόλει.* “Now comes another conjuncture; what conjuncture? That which voluntarily offers itself to the re- public from the Olynthians.” FRANCIS.

The Doctor is much displeased with your translating *καὶ ἄλλω τινι* *nothing but*. To be sure if it were clear from other arguments that the *λογος* and *σοφία* in question were *persons*, his translation would be the true one. But that those words cannot always be understood to mean *no other person* will be manifest from the following passage of Thucydides, Lib iv. cap. cxxvi. p. 311.

Οὐκ ἄλλω τινι κήσαμένοι τὴν δυνάσκειαν, ἢ τῷ μαχομένῳ κρατεῖν. Qui nulla alia ratione principatum sunt adepti, quam quod (hostes) præliando superarent.

As to the other passage from Theophilus, of which the Doctor takes notice in his 63d page, when you come to look at it again, you will perceive that you did not exactly hit on the meaning of the last line; and I think the Doctor was a little warped by his system, when he translated God *the* word, *the* wisdom, Man. I think it pretty plain from the preceding words, *τὸ θεὸς καὶ τὸ λογος, καὶ τῆς σοφίας αὐτοῦ*, that the words in question should be translated “that there might be God, *his* word, *his* wisdom, (and) man.” But this I submit to your better judgment.

Extract

Extract from the second Letter.

Nov. 5, 1783.

———“What sort of faces are we to carry, since this *neighbour* of ours has “put us to shame?” You might have got through the business: but what am *I*, a puny pedagogue, “*Iste Græculus*” who cannot conjugate a Greek verb, nor tell whether it be perfect or defective, what am *I* to do? It is a bad business sure enough; but it is not desperate; and notwithstanding the violence of the attack, I do not feel even a single wound.”

“I rather wondered that neither you, nor Mr. ——— desired me to give my authorities for what I advanced in my remarks. I had them ready; but I chose to keep them back. The adversary has fallen fairly into the ambuscade; and there he lies, open, as far as I can judge at present, to use his own language, to a good many “after-claps.” I have had the Review but a few hours, and business has taken up some of those few, so that I have not been able to pay much attention to it. However I have read it, and I have not perceived in it any thing that is formidable.”

“I think it a favourable circumstance for my *grammatical* reputation, which this tremendous champion has taken so much pains to celebrate, that my original copy (in which the unfortunate *TI* that obscures and “bastardizes” my Greek is not to be found) is still in being; otherwise, I suppose, I should hardly have been believed upon

my word, that I could have made out the first future middle optative of *συστήμιαι*, even with the help of a grammar. What a wretched mind, and what a tottering cause must that man have, who can descend to such self-degrading and ridiculous trivialities. However, I have already seen that he is not guarded against a retort of similar civilities."

This excellent critic will, I hope, be prevailed upon to give the public, at his leisure, a new edition of his valuable Remarks, with such additions and observations relating to the subject, as may occur to him. They will be esteemed by all good judges when the reply to them shall be forgotten.

I shall take this opportunity of saying, that the writer of these remarks is one of the few on whose friendship and approbation I place the highest value, and which I feel as a strong incentive to my labours. The good opinion of these few I am under no apprehension of ever losing; and, though I hope I should act the part which conscience dictates without that auxiliary motive, it is a great consolation to me, and much more than counterbalances the censures of all my opponents. That friendship with the wise and the virtuous, which I have the happiness to possess in this world, will, I trust, be resumed, and constitute a principal part of the felicity of another.

A C A T A-

A
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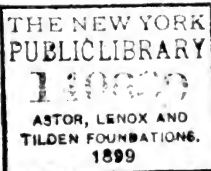
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MDCCLXXXIV.



T H E

P R E F A C E.

I AM truly concerned, that the discussion which I have entered into, of the historical evidence of the doctrine of the primitive ages concerning the person of Christ, has not taken the amicable turn that I proposed, and of which I gave a specimen in my former series of *Letters to Dr. Horsley*. Those were strictly argumentative, and likewise uniformly respectful. But as *his Letters*, in answer to me, are written in a style that is far from corresponding to mine, as the reader must perceive in every page, to reply to him in the same respectful manner in which I first wrote, would have been unnatural and absurd. In the present publication, therefore, I have taken the liberty to treat him with more freedom.

As he has declared that he will make no farther reply to me, I imagine that this publication will close the present controversy; and I hope it will not have been without its use, in promoting the cause of truth, though I am persuaded it would have answered this end still more effectually, if my proposal of a perfectly amicable discussion, and also that of bringing it to its proper termination, had been accepted.

I am now proceeding with my larger *History of the state of opinions concerning Christ in the primitive times*. But to execute this work as I wish to do it, and consistently with my other engagements and pursuits, will require a considerable time, hardly less than two or three years. Nor will my readers wonder at this, when I inform them, that I am determined to examine for myself every thing that has been written by any christian writer for the first five or six centuries after Christ, with the single view of collecting from them whatever I can find to throw light on this particular subject. After this examination, in which I have
already

already made considerable progress, I shall carefully attend to whatever the most respectable *modern writers* have advanced on this subject; and I shall then compose the work with all the circumspection that I am capable of; introducing into it any thing that I shall think proper from my different publications in this controversy (which I consider as only answering a temporary purpose) and then abandon it to the censures of my critics; and I hope there will not be wanting abler men than Dr. Horsley, to discover, and correct, whatever imperfections may, after all, be found in it.

I will not rashly commit myself with respect to the issue of an enquiry of this extent, and that is not yet completed; but I can assure my readers, that I see the most abundant cause to be satisfied with every thing of consequence that I have advanced in this controversy; and that I am able to produce much additional evidence for every article of it, as well as a variety of other matter relating to the subject, which will

throw light on the opinions, and turn of thinking, in early times.

Among other particulars, I shall examine as thoroughly as I can, those platonic notions concerning God, and the general system of things, which prepared the way for the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and of the trinity; shewing how they were understood, and how far they were adopted, by the christian writers. In the mean time, having long given a good deal of attention to the subject, I will venture to say, that from what Dr. Horsley has dropped concerning Platonism, as well as from the admiration he has expressed of it, he understands very little of the matter.

As I now consider this controversy as closed, it is probable that till my larger work be printed, the public will hear no more from me on this subject. But if any thing more plausible than has yet been urged should appear, I shall have an opportunity of noticing it in the *Theological Repository*,

pository, which I hope soon to open again ; and if any person will give his name, and propose any difficulty whatever relating to the present discussion, so that I shall see reason to think that it proceeds from a love of truth, and a desire of information, I here promise that I will speak fully to it, and I shall be as explicit as I possibly can. But to be more so than I have hitherto been, is impossible. Such as I have been, the public shall always find me. I have no reserve or concealment with respect to myself, and I shall always endeavour to preserve as much candour as possible with regard to others. But if I have been addicted to the *artifices* and *deceits* that Dr. Horsley so vehemently accuses me of, and if I have actually practised them to the age of fifty, I shall hardly lay them aside now. Let the public, therefore, be upon their guard against me, and “watch me as narrowly” as he says, p. 39, is necessary. Great changes in *character* and *habit* seldom take place at my age.

In this larger work, on which I am now employed, I find myself, in a great measure

upon new ground. At least, I see reason to think that it has never been sufficiently examined by any person who has had the same general views of things that I have. Dr. Lardner, who was as much conversant with the early christian writers as perhaps any man whatever, and whose sentiments on the subject of this controversy were the same with mine, yet had another object in reading them. When I applied to him for some assistance, it was too near the close of his life; and the few hints with which he did furnish me, related wholly to the doctrine of *atonement*, on which he had before published a small tract of mine.

Przipcovius wrote upon this subject, but what he has advanced is very short, and very imperfect. What Zuicker did, I can only learn from Bishop Bull, who had not seen all his works; but I suspect that he was not master of all the evidence that may be procured from a careful reading of ancient writers, and a comparison of the several circumstances to be collected from them; and

it certainly requires no small degree of patience, as well as judgment and sagacity, to trace the real state of the unitarian christians in early times from the writings of their enemies only. For all their own writings are either grossly interpolated, or have perished, except the *Clementines*, which is a work of great curiosity, and has not yet been sufficiently considered. But a candid reader will make allowance for this great disadvantage, which, as the historian of the unitarians, I must labour under. Who is there that will pretend to collect from the Roman historians only, a complete account of the affairs of the Carthaginians, the maxims of their conduct, and the motives of their public transactions, especially in relation to those things with respect to which we know that they mutually accused each other?

The *Clementines* (of which the *Recognitions* is little more than another edition) was probably written about the time of Justin Martyr. It is properly a *theological romance*, and a fine composition of its kind. The

author was perhaps too proud of his abilities as a writer; but his work is certainly superior to any thing that is now extant of that age, the writings of Justin Martyr by no means excepted. It abounds with curious circumstances relating to the customs and opinions of the times; and on that account it is strongly recommended by Cotelierius, the editor. He says, that
 “ though it abounds with trifles and errors,
 “ which had their source in a half christian
 “ philosophy, and heresy, especially that
 “ of the Ebionites, it may be read with
 “ advantage, both on account of the elegance of the style, and the various learning that it contains, and likewise for the
 “ better understanding the doctrine of the
 “ first heretics*.”

It is remarkable, not only that the author of this work, writing in the names of Peter

* Et vero quæ damus *Clementina*, licet nugis, licet erroribus scatent, a semichristiana philosophia, et hæresi, præcipue Ebionitica, profectis, non sine fructu tamen legentur, tum propter elegantiam sermonis, tum multiplicis doctrinæ causa, tum denique ad melius cognoscenda primarum Hæresion dogmata. *Preface.*

and

and Clement, makes them unitarians, but, that in a great variety of theological discussions upon nice subjects (in which every thing relating to the doctrine of the Gnostics, as it then stood, is minutely treated) there is no appearance of his having so much as heard of the doctrine of the *personification of the logos*, or of *the divinity or pre-existence of Christ*, in any other form than that of the Gnostics, except in some particular expressions, which Cotelerius supposes to be the interpolations of some Arian. It is probable, therefore, that though some of the works of Justin Martyr might perhaps have been extant when this writer was employed about his, they were but little known, or his opinions might have been adopted by few persons only.

Now this writer, whose knowledge of the state of opinions in his time cannot be questioned, would hardly have represented Peter and Clement as unitarians, if he had not thought them to be such. Nay, it may be inferred from the view that he has given of their principles, that, supposing
the

the doctrine of the trinity to have existed in his time, yet that Peter, Clement, and consequently the great body of christians in the apostolic age, were *generally thought* to have been unitarians, as he must have imagined that this circumstance would contribute to the credibility of his narrative. A writer who personates another, will be as careful as he can to ascribe to him no opinions but such as are commonly supposed to be his; for without this the imposition, if any such was intended, could not answer his purpose. But I much question whether any serious imposition was really intended by this writer. The farther consideration of this subject, however, I reserve for my larger work.

To return from this digression, I shall observe, that, as to the learned christians of the last age (excepting the Athanasians) they were almost all Arians, such as Dr. Whitby, Dr. Clarke, Mr. Whiston, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Pierce, &c. In their time, it was a great thing to prove that the doctrine of the perfect equality of the Son to the
the

the Father, in all divine perfections, was not the doctrine of the early ages. Those writers could not, indeed, help perceiving traces of the doctrine of the *simple humanity of Christ*; but taking it for granted that this was an opinion concerning him as much *too low*, as that of the Athanasians was *too high*, and there being no distinguished advocates for the proper unitarian doctrine in their time, they did not give sufficient attention to the circumstances relating to it. These circumstances it will be my business to collect, and to compare; and, situated as I am, it may be depended upon, that I shall do it with all the circumspection of which I am capable.

Notwithstanding the fullness of my own persuasion, I am far from being sanguine in my expectations with respect to others, even from the strongest evidence that I can produce, of the primitive christians having been universally, or very generally, unitarians. Though there do not appear to be so many learned Arians at present as there were thirty or forty years ago, yet I am well

well aware that the impression made by their writings is such, as that those persons who have now the most reputation for theological literature (having, in fact, been their disciples) are very generally of their opinion, as I myself formerly was; and therefore that there is at present, as might well be expected, a general prepossession against me among the more learned christians, with respect to this argument.

I am also not so ignorant of history, or of human nature, as not to be sensible, that *time* is requisite to make any considerable change even in the opinions of the learned; though it certainly requires more time to produce an equal change in those of the unlearned; and with respect to most persons who are advanced in life, it is hardly to be expected from any force of argument. But in the last ten years a very great change has been made in the opinions of those who have given much attention to theological matters, and the number of unitarians is greatly increased. A learned Trinitarian is almost a phenomenon in this country.

country, and learned Arians are much fewer than they have been*. And when the *historical arguments* in favour of proper unitarianism, which have hitherto been very much overlooked, shall be duly attended to, especially that which arises from the consideration of the great body of the common people among christians having thought that Christ was simply *a man inspired of God*, and their having had no knowledge of his *pre-existence*, the conclusion that such a general persuasion must have been derived from the apostles having taught no other doctrine, will not easily be avoided. It will also weigh much with those who are apt to lay great stress on the usual construction of some *particular texts*, to consider, that, in those early times, the scriptures were constantly read by persons better qualified to understand the language of them than

* By a *learned Trinitarian* or *Arian*, I do not mean a man who has merely classical literature, any more than mathematical or philosophical knowledge; but one who, having a competent knowledge of the learned languages, has made *theology* and *ecclesiastical history* his principal study. And I much question whether this has been the case with Doctor Horsley.

we at this time can pretend to be, without suggesting any such notions of the divinity, or the pre-existence of Christ, as are now supposed to be clearly contained in them. When these, I say, and other similar arguments, shall have had time to operate, they will, I am confident, meet with less obstruction continually, and produce a still greater change in ten years to come.

As the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ came in with philosophical and speculative people, and required many centuries, and those years of gross darkness, before it laid firm hold on the minds of the common people, it will certainly remain a long time with them; and a disposition to accommodate to these will likewise operate to quicken the zeal of many teachers of christianity in its defence. This will, no doubt, protract the æra of reformation, towards which the enlightened friends of christianity look forwards with confidence and joy, to a more distant period.

In

In the mean time, it is a great satisfaction to reflect, that, whatever difficulties may lie in the way of truth, no proper effort to remove them can be without its effect. So regular are the laws of nature, respecting even the human mind, and the influences to which it is exposed, that no endeavours to instruct or reform the world can be wholly lost. Like seed thrown into the ground, they may *seem* to be lost, but in due time, if the soil be good, and other circumstances favourable (and for these things, we, who scatter our seed promiscuously, must take our chance) the harvest will, in its proper season, be abundant. This consideration should encourage all the labourers in the great field of mankind to *plow in hope*, and to *sow in hope*; that, if not we, at least our posterity, may *become partakers of our hope*. 1 Cor. ix. 10.

I can already perceive that several persons of more ingenuous dispositions among my Arian friends are much struck with some of the circumstances which I have brought to light, and others have had their objections completely removed; so
that.

that I am not without hope that a much greater number will think as I now do, when my *larger work* shall be published; especially if a sufficient degree of attention be excited to the subject. In this view I am truly thankful for what has already been done by Dr. Horsley, and the Monthly Reviewers, and on this account I sincerely wish that their credit and influence were more considerable and extensive than they are. This opposition, and the effect of it abroad, will contribute to make the controversy better known; and though the truth may be borne down for a time, it will be the more firmly established in consequence of it, in the end. It is like sinking a piece of cork, which, with the greater force it is plunged under water, with the greater force and celerity it will recover its natural place. It is with great tranquility and satisfaction that I look forward towards this period; and I should not be qualified to appear before the public at all, if, in the mean time, I could not look upon such an opposition as I have hitherto experienced with a mixture of indifference and contempt.

When

When this investigation shall be completely finished, it will, probably, be matter of surprize to many, that it was not sooner discovered, that the unitarians *must have been*, and certainly *were*, the great body of common christians till after the council of Nice. It may even be said, that there was very little merit indeed, in proving a thing so extremely obvious, and that many other persons had proved it quite as well before. I shall, if I live to see it, rejoice in this change of opinion, let who will have contributed to it.

In the mean time, what is all the opposition that a man can meet with, from whatever persons, and in whatever form it be carried on, when weighed against the full conviction of his own mind, arising from a fair and careful examination? And with respect to the judgment of the Public, the effect of any mode of opposition is only temporary. What did the unqualified approbation of all the defenders of a pretended *common sense*, by the Monthly Reviewers of that day, do for the doctrine?

b

Has

Has it now any advocates? Those Reviewers quote, without the least suspicion of any thing amiss, even Dr. Oswald's refutation of the only satisfactory argument for the being of a God, viz. from the consideration of *cause and effect*. But what has it availed in the issue? And what signified the rancour with which they treated my defence of the true common sense against the spurious one? Though much admired in its day, it has not been in their power to rescue it from oblivion.

Though Dr. Horsley is determined to make no reply to me (and, indeed, unless he was better informed with respect to this subject, it is more advisable for him to leave the field to abler writers) he is accountable to the Public for misleading them, as he has done with respect to *facts* in ancient history, and for his defamation of the illustrious dead; as well as for his want of common candour, and his misrepresentations as to the living. If he be an honest man, and of an ingenuous mind, he must, in some mode
or

or other, either refute this charge, or acknowledge the justness of it. He says, with respect to me, p. 6. "A writer of whom "it is once proved that he is ill informed "upon his subject, has no right to demand "a farther hearing." To which of us two the observation best applies, let others judge. When he has read these *Letters* (if he should think proper to read them at all) he will, I presume, be a little better informed than he is at present; and then I shall have no objection to his having another hearing, but I shall not think myself bound to reply.

As to the Monthly Reviewer, Mr. Badcock, if he should ever really study the subject of this controversy (which it is evident enough he has not done yet) he will find that he is mistaken with respect to every part of it; and if ever he comes to reflect upon his conduct in this business in a moral light, he will feel more than I should wish him, or any man to do, except for his own good.

b 2

I shall

I shall close this preface with reminding the reader, that he should carefully distinguish with respect to the *importance* of the different articles that are now the subject of discussion. To prevent any material mistake of this kind, I published a small pamphlet, intitled, *A General View of the Arguments for the Unity of God, and against the Divinity and Pre-existence of Christ, from Reason, from the Scriptures, and from History*; that when any advantage should be gained, either by myself, or my antagonists, it might be seen at once what the amount of it really was, and be estimated accordingly. To this small piece, and especially the *Maxims of historical Criticism*, contained in it, and in my former *Letters to Dr. Horsley*, I wish that particular attention may be given in the course of this controversy, whether carried on by myself or others.

Large works, particularly of the historical kind, were never yet known to be free from mistakes. The subject of my *History*
of

of the Corruptions of Christianity was so complex, and my attention was of course divided among such a variety of different articles, and the materials were collected at the distance of so many years, that I really wonder that it has escaped so well as it has done; not one mistake having been discovered in it, that at all affects my general design. What are all the errors put together compared to that gross one which I have shewn Mosheim and Dr. Horsley to have fallen into; and yet the credit of Mosheim's history will not be materially affected by it on the whole? It is a work that I shall not scruple to quote myself, as I may have occasion, making due allowance for the author's peculiar prejudices. The candid reader will make the same allowance for me. Time, however, will shew what the oversights have been. These will, of course, be corrected, and what remains will stand the firmer on that account.

Though I cannot say to Dr. Horsley, as he does to me, p. 9. "I should have
"more than a single remark to make on
b 3 "almost

“almost every sentence of every one of your
“ten letters,” it would have been easy for
me, from the materials that I have already
collected, to have extended this publication
to a much greater length. But I do not
chuse, in these temporary pieces, to forestal
my larger work ; though I think it may be
of use to produce so much of what I have
collected, as may tend to excite a more ge-
neral attention to the subject, and invite
others to engage in the same inquiry ; that
when I do publish that work, I may find
more readers properly prepared to judge of
it than there appear to be at present. For
that there are at present those who are not
thus prepared, there cannot be a clearer
indication, than that the writings of Mr.
Badcock and Dr. Horsley in this contro-
versy have found admirers. Indeed, if I
had not had the object above-mentioned,
and also thought that their animadversions
gave me a good opportunity of producing
additional evidence for what I had advanced
in my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*,
I should not have troubled myself with re-
plying to their objections, or abuse. If I
had

had left all their darts sticking in my buckler, they would not have retarded my progress.

At all events, I wish the most rigorous investigation of this subject to proceed, whatever may be the consequence with respect to my opinions, or myself; as I can sincerely adopt the prayer of Ajax, quoted by me in my first controversy with Dr. Brown.

Ποιησον δ' αἰθρην, δὸς δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδεῖσθαι,
 Ἐν δ' ἔφαιε καὶ ὀλεσσον.

Hom. Il. Lib. xvii. v. 646.

Give me but day, let light the truth disclose;
 Though *me* its beams confound, and not *my* foes.

Since the whole of this treatise was sent to the press, I have seen a posthumous piece of Dr. Lardner's, just published, intitled, *Four Discourses on Phil.* ii. 4. --- 12. which I cannot omit this opportunity of most earnestly recommending to all my readers. It is written with that simplicity and modesty which distinguish all his writ-

ings ; and I should think it cannot fail to make a great impression on those whose minds are at all open to conviction, in favour of the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ. This he generally calls the *Nazarean*, and sometimes the *Unitarian* doctrine, as opposed both to the Trinitarian and the Arian schemes, which he particularly considers. “ This,” he says, p. 70, “ seems to be the plainest, and most “ simple scheme of all ; and it is generally “ allowed to have been the belief of the “ Nazarean christians, or the Jewish believers.”

For the convenience of the reader, I have subjoined to this preface, a short state of the different opinions held by Dr. Horsley and myself on the subject of this controversy ; and also an account of the time in which the principal ecclesiastical writers, and other persons whose names most frequently occur in the course of it, flourished. This will also be useful to the readers of my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*.

Having,

Having, in the course of this controversy, had occasion very carefully to revise that part of the *History* which relates to the person of Christ, I can assure the reader, that I see no reason to make any more than the following *corrections* and *alterations*; which, considering the difficulty, and extent of the undertaking, will, I think, be deemed to be very inconsiderable, and, upon the whole, by no means unfavourable to my principal object.

N. B. (*b*) signifies *from the bottom of the page*.

P. 7. l. 8. (*b*) after *Nazarenes*, read *and it may be inferred from Origen, Epiphanius, and Eusebius, that the, &c.*

P. 9. l. 7. read *on account of the errors it contained, and these errors could be no other than the unitarian doctrine.*

P. 19. l. 2. after *corrupted*, add *and as these unitarians are called idiotæ (common and ignorant people) by Tertullian, it is more natural to look for ancient opinions among them than among the learned, who are more apt to innovate. With such manifest unfairness does Eusebius, or a more ancient writer, whose sentiments he adopts, treat the unitarians, &c.*

Ib. l. 6. for *successor*, read *predecessor*.

P. 29. l. 9. &c. (*b*) dele all within the parenthesis.

P. 32. l. 3. (*b*) dele, *is not quoted by Irenæus and, &c.*

P. 55.

P. 55. l. 7. (b) read *the greater part*.

P. 74. l. 6. dele, *According to Epiphanius*, and to the end of the sentence.

P. 99. l. 6. (b) read *that there may be God, the word, wisdom, man*.

P. 216. l. 12. For *our Lord*, read *the Lord*.

IN VOL. II.

P. 11. l. 10. read, *In this age the table on which it was celebrated was called the mystical table, and Theophilus, to whom Jerom (if the epistle be genuine) writes, says, that the very utensils, &c.*

For this last correction, I am obliged to the writer of the Critical Review; and I shall be thankful to any of my readers for the notice of any other oversight, from which a work of this extent could not be expected to be exempt.

N. B. A copy of these corrections will be given to the purchasers of the *History*.

A CATALOGUE

A CATALOGUE of the principal Ecclesiastical Writers, &c. after the Apostolic Age, with the Time when they flourished, chiefly from Cave's *Historia Literaria*.

[Gnatus,	A. D.	101	Beryllus	230
Polycarp		108	Dionysius (of Alex-	
Papias	-	110	andria)	- 247
Basilides	-	120	Cyprian	248
Valentinus		125	Noetus	- 250
Marcion	-	130	Novatian	- 251
Justin Martyr		140	Gregory of Neo-	
Irenæus	-	167	cesarea	252
Theophilus		168	Paul of Samosata	260
Hegesippus		170	Sabellius	- 260
Montanus	-	172	Manes	- 277
Tatian	-	172	Arnobius	- 303
Athenagoras		177	Lactantius	303
Artemon	-	187	Arius	- 315
Theodotus of			Eusebius Pamphilus	
Byzantium		192	the historian	315
Clemens Alexan-			Athanasius	326
drinus		192	Marcellus of Ancyra	330
Tertullian		192	Photinus	344
Symmachus		201	Cyril of Jerusalem	350
Caius	-	210	Hilary	- 354
Hippolytus		220	Eunomius	360
Origen	-	230	Apollinarius (sen.)	362
			Epiphanius	

xxviii *A Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers.*

Epiphanius	368	Pelagius	405
Optatus -	368	Theodorus of	
Basil -	370	Mopsuestia	407
Gregory (Nyssen)	370	Cyril of Alexandria	412
Gregory (Nazianzen)	370	Theodoret	425
Apollinarius (jun.)	370	Nestorius	428
Ambrose	374	Eutyches -	448
Jerom	378	Claudianus Ma-	
Austin -	396	mertus	462
Chrysostom	398	Facundus -	540
Sulpicius Severus	401	Gregory the Great	590

The same in alphabetical Order.

Ambrose -	374	Claudianus Ma-	
Apollinarius, sen.	362	mertus	462
——— jun.	370	Clemens Alexan-	
Arius -	315	drinus	192
Arnobius -	303	Cyprian -	248
Artemon -	187	Cyril of Alexandria	412
Athanasius	326	——— Jerusalem	350
Athenagoras -	177	Dionysius of	
Austin -	396	Alexandria	247
Basil - -	370	Epiphanius	368
Basilides -	120	Eunomius -	360
Beryllus	230	Eusebius Pamphilus	315
Caius - -	210	Eutyches -	448
Chrysostom	398	Facundus	540
		Gregory	

Gregory the Great	590	Optatus	- - -	368
—— of Neoce-		Origen	-	230
farea	252	Papias	- - -	110
—— Nazian-		Paul of Samosata		260
zen	370	Pelagius		405
—— Nyssen	370	Photinus	-	344
Hegesippus	170	Polycarp	-	108
Hilary - -	354	Sabellius	-	260
Hippolytus	220	Sulpicius Severus		401
Ignatius -	101	Symmachus		201
Jerom -	378	Tatian - -		172
Irenæus - -	167	Tertullian		192
Justin Martyr	140	Theodoret -		425
Lactantius	303	Theodorus of		
Manes - -	277	Mopsuestia		407
Marcellus of Ancyra	330	Theodotus of		
Marcion -	130	Byzantium		192
Montanus -	172	Theophilus of		
Nestorius -	428	Antioch		168
Noetus -	250	Valentinus		125
Novatian -	251			

The different Opinions of Dr. HORSLEY and Dr. PRIESTLEY, briefly stated.

THAT my readers may more easily form a clear and comprehensive idea of the *nature* and *extent* of this controversy, I shall, in this place, briefly state the principal articles on which Dr. Horsley and myself hold different opinions.

1. Dr. Horsley insists upon it, that the faith of the primitive christian church must have been trinitarian, because that doctrine appears in the writings of Barnabas and Ignatius. I say that, admitting these works to be genuine *in the main*, they bear evident marks of interpolation with respect to this very subject, and therefore the conclusion is not just.

2. Dr. Horsley says, that those who are called *Ebionites*, did not exist in the age of the apostles, and also that, though they believed the simple humanity of Christ, they probably held some mysterious exaltation of his nature after his ascension, which made him the object of prayer to them. I say the Ebionites certainly existed in the time of the apostles, and that this notion of their holding such an exaltation of his nature, as to make him the object of prayer, is highly improbable.

3. Dr.

3. Dr. Horsley says, that those who are called *Nazarenes* by the early christian writers, believed the divinity of Christ, that they did not exist till after the time of Adrian, and had their name from the place where they settled in the North of Galilee, after they were then driven from Jerusalem. I maintain that these Nazarenes no more believed the divinity of Christ than the Ebionites, and that, together with them, they were supposed, by the christian Fathers, to have existed in the time of the apostles.

4. Dr. Horsley maintains that there was a church of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem, after the time of Adrian; for that the body of Jewish christians, who had before observed the law of Moses, abandoned their ceremonies after the destruction of the place, in order to obtain the privileges of the *Ælian* colony, settled there by Adrian. Origen who asserts that the Jewish christians had not abandoned the laws and customs of their ancestors, Dr. Horsley says must have known the contrary, and therefore asserted a wilful falsehood. I say that Adrian expelled all the Jews, whether christians or not, from Jerusalem, that the christian church afterwards settled at Jerusalem consisted wholly of Gentile converts, and that the testimony of Origen, agreeing with this, is highly worthy of credit.

5. Dr. Horsley maintains, that though he finds no unitarians in the apostolic age, a cen-

sure was intended for them by the apostle John in the phrase *Christ came in the flesh*. I assert that, the unitarians did exist in great numbers in the time of John, but that he did not censure them at all; and that the phrase *Christ came in the flesh*, relates to the Gnostics only.

6. Dr. Horsley asserts, that the unitarians, from the time that they made their appearance, were considered as *heretics* by the orthodox christians, and not admitted to communion with them, and particularly that they were included by Justin Martyr among those heretics whom he charges with *blasphemy*. I assert that in Justin's time, and much later, the unitarians were not deemed heretics at all, that Justin did not even allude to unitarians in either of his two accounts of *heretics in general*, and that the *blasphemy* he speaks of respected the Gnostics only.

7. Though Tertullian says the *idiotæ*, who were the greater part of christians were unitarians, and shocked at the doctrine of the trinity, Dr. Horsley asserts that he only meant to include a small number of them in that class, and those so ignorant and stupid as to deserve to be called *ideots*. I maintain that by *idiotæ* he only meant *unlearned persons*, or *persons in private life*; and I also maintain that even in Origen's time, and long after, a great part of these christians were unitarians, and in communion with the catholic church; that the term *heresy* was long used as
I
synonymous

synonymous to *Gnosticism*, and that the original use of the term frequently occurs even after the unitarians were deemed to be heretics.

8. Dr. Horsley maintains that by the Jews who held the simple humanity of Christ, Athanasius meant the unbelieving Jews only, and that the Gentiles who were by them converted to that belief, were unbelieving Gentiles. I say the Jews were christian Jews, and their converts christian Gentiles.

9. Dr. Horsley maintains that the Jews in our Saviour's time, believed in the doctrine of the trinity, that they expected the second person in the trinity as their Messiah, and that they changed their opinion concerning him when the christians applied it to Christ. I say that the Jews were always unitarians, that they expected only a man for their Messiah, and that they never changed their opinion on that subject.

10. Dr. Horsley says that the apostles considered Christ as being *God* from the time that they considered him as the Messiah. I say that they considered him as *a mere man*, when they received him as the Messiah, and that we find no evidence in their history, or in their writings, that they ever changed that opinion concerning him.

11. Dr.

11. Dr. Horsley denies that the orthodox fathers before the council of Nice, held that the logos had been an attribute of the deity, and then assumed a proper personality; and says that all that they meant by the *generation of the son*, was the *display of his powers* in the production of material beings. I assert, that by this *generation*, they certainly meant a *change of state* in the logos, viz. from a mere *attribute*, such as *reason* is in man, to a *proper person*, and that in their opinion this was made with a view to the creation of the world.

12. Dr. Horsley can find no difference between this doctrine of the personification of the logos, and the peculiar opinions of the Arians. I assert that they were two schemes directly opposed to each other, and so clearly defined, as never to have been confounded or mistaken.

13. Dr. Horsley asserts, that it seems to have been the opinion of all the Fathers, and is likewise agreeable to the scriptures, that the second person in the trinity had his origin from the first person contemplating his own perfections. I challenge him to produce any authority whatever, ancient or modern, for that opinion.

14. Dr. Horsley maintains that, though the three persons in the trinity have each of them all the perfections of deity, the Father is the fountain of the divinity, and has some unknown pre-eminence.

nence. I assert that this pre-eminence is inconsistent with the proper *equality*, and that if they be properly equal, they must necessarily be three gods as well as three persons.

15. Dr. Horsley says, that prayer for succour in external prosecution, seems with particular propriety to be addressed to the Son. I say that this is altogether a distinction of his own, and has no countenance in scripture precept or example, nor, indeed, in those of the primitive church.

16. Dr. Horsley maintains that the unitarians do not even pretend that the general tenor of scripture is in their favour, that they cannot produce any text that plainly contains their doctrine, but that they derive it wholly from particular passages, to which they give a figurative interpretation. Whereas I maintain that the unitarians have always appealed to the general tenor of scripture, and the plain language of it; and on the contrary, that the trinitarians cannot find *their* doctrine either in the general tenor, or in any clear texts of scripture, but that they deduce it from particular expressions, and circumstances, which, when rightly explained, do by no means authorize their conclusions.

17. Dr. Horsley says, that the difference between the unitarians and the Mahometans is so
c 2 small,

small, and such advances were made towards the Mahometans by the unitarians of the last age, that there is good ground to think, that the unitarians will soon acknowledge the divine mission of Mahomet. He also represents christianity on the principles of unitarianism, as inferior to deism, and when joined with materialism, as highly favourable to atheism. Such charges as these, I say, can proceed from nothing but ignorance and malevolence, and do not deserve a serious refutation.

These are all the articles of importance on which we hold different opinions, every thing else being of less moment, and subordinate to these.

THE

T H E

C O N T E N T S.

	Page
<i>THE Preface</i> - - - -	i
<i>A catalogue of the principal ecclesiastical writers, &c. after the apostolic age, with the time when they flourished, chiefly from Cave's Historia Literaria</i>	xxv
<i>The different opinions of Dr. Horsley and Dr. Priestley, briefly stated</i> - - - -	xxx

L E T T E R I.

<i>The Introduction</i> - - - -	2
---------------------------------	---

L E T T E R II.

<i>Of the doctrine of the first ages concerning the person of Christ</i> - - - -	6
--	---

L E T T E R III.

<i>Of the Nazarenes and Ebionites</i> - - - -	15
---	----

L E T T E R IV.

<i>Of a supposed orthodox Jewish church at Jerusalem, and of the veracity of Origen</i> - - - -	36
---	----

L E T T E R V.

<i>Of heresy in the earliest times</i> - - - -	47
--	----

L E T T E R VI.

<i>Of the sentiments of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Cle- mens Alexandrinus, concerning heresy</i> - - - -	53
---	----

C O N T E N T S.

L E T T E R VII.

<i>Of the state of heresy in the time of Tertullian</i>	61
---	----

L E T T E R VIII.

<i>Of Origen's idea of heresy</i>	73
-----------------------------------	----

L E T T E R IX.

<i>Of the light in which the unitarians were considered in later ages, and of the state of the common people at all times</i>	89
---	----

L E T T E R X.

<i>Of the quotation from Athanasius</i>	89
---	----

L E T T E R XI.

<i>Of the time when Christ began to be considered as God, and the opinion of the ancient and modern Jews with respect to the Messiah</i>	103
--	-----

L E T T E R XII.

<i>Of the personification of the logos</i>	124
--	-----

L E T T E R XIII.

<i>Considerations relating to the doctrine of the trinity</i>	134
---	-----

L E T T E R XIV.

<i>Of prayer to Christ</i>	154
----------------------------	-----

L E T T E R XV.

<i>Of the unitarian principles with respect to Mahometanism and infidelity</i>	169
--	-----

L E T T E R XVI.

<i>Of Bishop Bull's defence of damnatory clauses</i>	179
--	-----

L E T T E R

C O N T E N T S.

L E T T E R XVII.

<i>Of the light in which the dissenters are considered by the Archdeacon of St. Albans, and of the penalties to which the unitarians among them are subject</i>	-	177
---	---	-----

L E T T E R XVIII.

<i>Of the charge of wilful misrepresentation, &c.</i>		186
---	--	-----

L E T T E R XIX.

<i>Miscellaneous articles, and the conclusion</i>	-	194
---	---	-----

<i>APPENDIX to Letter VIII. relating to the argument for the novelty of the doctrine of the trinity, from the alarm that it gave to the common people</i>	-	209
---	---	-----

E R R A T A.

N. B. (*b*) signifies from the bottom of the page.

P. 95. l. 1. (*b*) for *unbegotten*, read *only begotten*.

P. 107. l. 6. for *Sheclinab*, read *Shechinab*.

P. 42. l. 8. for *then*, read *there*.

L E T T E R S

TO THE

ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBANS.

L E T T E R I.

The Introduction.

REV. SIR,

AT length you have condescended to gratify my wishes, and have favoured me with a series of letters, in answer to mine. But as they are written with a degree of insolence, which nothing in your situation or mine can justify, and indicate a temper that appears to me to be very far from being the most proper for the discussion of historical truth; I shall consider myself, in this answer, as writing not so much to you, as to the candid part of the public, to whom our correspondence is open; and I have no doubt but that I shall be able to satisfy all who are qualified to judge between us, that your ignorance of the subject which you have undertaken to discuss, is equal to your insolence; and therefore, that there is no great reason to regret that you have formed a resolution to appear no more in this controversy, "Whatever, more," you say, p. 9.

B

"you

“ you may find to say upon the subject, in me you
 “ will have no antagonist.”

I made the proposal to discuss the question of the state of opinions concerning Christ in the early ages, in a perfectly amicable, and as I thought, the most advantageous manner, and my address to you, was uniformly respectful. It has not been my fault that this proposal was not accepted. You say, p. 166. “ I held it my duty to use pretty freely that high
 “ seasoning of controversy which may interest the
 “ readers attention.” What that *high seasoning* is, is sufficiently apparent through the whole of your performance, viz. a violation of all decency, and perpetual imputations of the grossest, but of the most improbable kind. This, from respect to the public, and to myself, I shall not return; but I shall certainly think myself authorized by it to treat you with a little less ceremony in the present publication, in which I shall take occasion from your gross mistakes, and misrepresentations, to throw some farther light on the subject of this discussion.

The reader must have been particularly struck with the frequent boasting of your *victory*, as if the controversy had come to a regular termination, and the public had decided in your favour. “ My victory,” you say, p. 7. “ is already so compleat, “ that I might well decline any farther contest.” In p. 160. you say, “ it would have heightened the “ pride of my victory if I could have found a fair “ occasion to be the herald of my adversary’s
 “ praise.”

“praise.” P. 10. you call me a *foiled polemic*, and p. 8. a *prostrate enemy*. What marks of *prostration* you may have perceived in me, I cannot tell. I do not know that I have yet laid myself at your feet, and I presume, this kind of language is rather premature. It will be time enough for you to say with Entellus, *Hic castus artemque repono*, when the victory, of which you boast, shall be as clear as his, and shall be declared to be so by the *proper judges*. You ought also to have remembered the advice of Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 2. *Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth, a stranger and not thine own lips.*

On the contrary, I cautioned my reader (preface, p. 19) not to conclude too hastily in my favour, but to wait till you had made your reply. You have now done it, and I hope they will do me the justice to hear me again in return, especially as this will probably be the last time that I shall trouble them in this way.

Though this controversy has not come to what I think its proper and desirable termination, I rejoice that it has proceeded thus far; and upon the whole I derive great satisfaction from the opposition that my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* has met with; both because a more general attention has been excited to the subject; and also because, having, by this means, been led to attend to it more than I should otherwise have done, I have discovered a variety of ad-

ditional evidence in support of what I had advanced, and such an abundant confirmation of the evidence before produced, as gives even myself a greater degree of confidence in it than I could otherwise have had. And when my readers in general shall see, as they cannot but see, with what extreme eagerness the most insignificant oversights have been caught at, and magnified, and the readiness with which I have acknowledged such oversights, notwithstanding the gross insults with which this candour has been treated, and also that every objection has brought out new evidence in my favour, it cannot but beget a persuasion, that the most sharp-sighted adversary will not be able to detect any mistake of real consequence; and from this will be derived a degree of credit to my work that nothing else could have given it. Your object, you say, p. 8. was to *demolish the credit of my narrative*; but I am much mistaken if, instead of that, your weak, though violent opposition, has not greatly contributed to strengthen it.

You will perhaps be struck with the change in the style of my address to you, when you observe me beginning with *Rev. Sir*, instead of the *Dear Sir* of my former letters, an appellation to which our personal acquaintance gave a propriety, and which you have returned; but when I consider how ill it corresponds to the spirit of your letters, and the stress you lay on your *Archidiaconal dignity*, which appears not only in the title-page of your work, but at the head of many of your letters,

and

and which you intimate, p. 158. that I had not sufficiently attended to, I thought the style of *Rev. Sir*, and occasionally that of *Mr. Archdeacon* both more proper, and also more pleasing to yourself, and therefore I have adopted it. And if, by any accident, I should *wound your feelings*, p. 159. you will find the proper balm in my *running title*.

While persons who have some personal acquaintance treat each other with decent respect, and are uniform in doing it, as I have been to you, the usual style of *Dear Sir* is natural, and proper; but when you charge me with numerous instances of the grossest artifice, and imposition on the Public, you in fact *give me the lie*; and therefore ought yourself to have dropped all terms expressive of affection and regard. I renounce all particular respect for the man who has treated me in this manner; and in the outset of this second part of our correspondence, I subscribe myself, merely because custom authorizes the form,

Rev. Sir,

Your very humble servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

L E T T E R H.

*Of the doctrine of the first ages concerning the person
of Christ.*

REV. SIR,

TO shew you that I see nothing very formidable in your strongest arguments, I shall begin with what you call "your *positive proof*, p. 64. "that the divinity of our Lord was the belief of "the very first christians." This proof is wholly derived from the epistle of Barnabas.

Of Barnabas you say, p. 66. "You allow him "a place among the fathers of the apostolic age, "and will you not allow that he was a believer "in our Lord's divinity? I will not take upon "me, Sir, to answer this question for you; but "I will take upon me to say, that whoever denies it, must deny it to his own shame. The "proof from this writer," you say, "p. 68. is so "direct and full, though it lies in a narrow compass, that if this be laid in one scale, and your "whole mass of evidence from incidental and "ambiguous allusions in the other, the latter "would fly up and kick the beam."

I am surprized, Sir, at the extreme confidence with which you tread this very precarious and
uncertain

uncertain ground ; when, to say nothing of the doubts entertained by many learned men concerning the genuineness of this epistle, the most that is possible to be admitted is, that it is genuine *in the main*. For whether you may have observed it or not, it is most evidently *interpolated*, and the interpolations respect the very subject of which we treat. Two passages in the Greek, which assert the pre-existence of Christ, are omitted in the ancient Latin version of it. And can it be supposed that that version was made in an age in which such an omission was likely to be made ? Both the interpolations are in sect. vi. where we now read thus : λεγει γαρ η γραφη περι ημων, ως λεγει τω υιω, ποιησωμεν και εικονα και καθ' ομοιωσιν ημων, τον ανθρωπον. *For the scripture says concerning us, as he says to the Son, Let us make man according to our image, and our likeness.* But the ancient Latin version corresponding to this passage is simply this, *Sicut dicit scriptura, Faciamus hominem, &c. i. e. As says the scripture, Let us make man, &c.*

Again, in the same section, after quoting from Moses, *Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth*, the Greek copy has, ταυτα προς τον υιον, *These things to the Son* ; but in the old Latin version the clause is wholly omitted ; and certainly there is no want of it, or of the similar clause in the former passage, with respect to the general object of the writer. These, Sir, appear to me pretty evident marks of interpolation.

The passage on which you lay the chief stress is only in the Latin version, that part of the Greek copy to which it corresponds being now lost; and all the other expressions that you note are such as an Unitarian will find no difficulty in accommodating to his principles.

On these accounts, your evidence from this epistle of Barnabas will by no means bear the stress that you lay upon it. Can it be thought at all improbable, that if one person interpolated the Greek, another should make as free with the Latin version? I must therefore see other evidence than this from Barnabas, before I can admit that the doctrine of the divinity or pre-existence of Christ was the belief of the apostolic age.

You still argue with the same confidence from the epistle of Clemens Romanus. "The context," you now say, p. 29. "determines the coming of Christ, of which he speaks, to be from a pre-existent state," and this you call "something of great importance in its defence," as no doubt it would be, if it was just; but let us examine it. The whole of the passage, with the small context on which you lay so much stress, is, in your own words, as follows; "He came not, says Clemens, in the pomp of pride and arrogance, although he had it in his power, but in humility, as the Holy Spirit spake concerning him.—To determine what this humility is, Clemens immediately goes on to
"cite

“ cite the prophecies which describe the Messiah’s low condition. The humility, therefore, of an ordinary condition, is that in which it is said the Messiah came. The pomp, therefore, of a high condition, is the pomp in which it is said he came not, although he had it in his power to come. The expressions, therefore, clearly imply that our Lord, ere he came, had the power to choose in what condition he would be born.”

But, Sir, had you considered the prophecies which Clemens quotes, you would have found them to be not such as describe the circumstances of his *birth*, but only those of his *public life* and *death*; the principal of them being, Is. liii. which he quotes almost at full length. How then does this *important circumstance* help your argument? It is, on the other hand, certainly favourable to mine, viz. that when Christ was in public life, he made no ostentatious display of the extraordinary powers, with which he was invested, and preferred a low condition to that of a great prince.

The more ancient reading that you quote of Jerom, I also consider as evidently favourable to my interpretation of this passage. He read *πᾶσα δύναμις*, *having all power*, which naturally alludes to the great power of which he became possessed after the descent of the spirit of God upon him at his baptism.

As

As to the phrase *coming*, you must be little *at home*; as you say, in the language of the scriptures, or have given little attention to it, not to have perceived, that it is a phrase used to express *the mission of any prophet*, and that it is applied to John the Baptist as well as to Christ, of which the following are examples. Matt. xi. 18, 19. *John came neither eating nor drinking, &c. The son of man came eating and drinking, &c.* i. e. not locally from heaven, but as the prophets came from God. Christ says of John, Matt. xxi. 32. *John came unto you in the way of righteousness.* John the evangelist also says of him, John i. 7. *The same came for a witness, &c.* so that all your descanting upon this passage of Clemens is impertinent.

Admitting that some one circumstance in the prophecies he quotes, rigorously interpreted, should allude to the birth of Christ (though I see no reason to think so) you are not authorized to conclude that Clemens attended to that in particular, but to the general scope of the whole, which is evidently descriptive of his public life only.

If with your boasted knowledge of *Greek*, you had attended ever so little to the *theory of language* in general, and the natural *use of words*, you would have seen, that the term *God* would not, from the beginning, have been used by way of contradistinction to *Christ*; if the former could have been predicated of the latter. We say *the prince and the king*, because the prince is not a king. If he had,
we

we should have had recourse to some other distinction, as that of *greater* and *less*, *senior* and *junior*, *father* and *son*, &c. When therefore the apostle Paul said, that the church at Corinth was *Christ's*, and that *Christ was God's* (and that manner of distinguishing them is perpetual in the New Testament) it is evident, that he could have no idea of Christ being *God*, in any proper sense of the word.

In like manner, Clemens, in this passage, calling *Christ* the *scepter of the majesty of God*, sufficiently proves that, in his idea, the *scepter* was one thing, and the God whose scepter it was, another. This, I say, must have been the case when this language was first adopted, though when principles are once formed, we see, by a variety of experience, that any language may be accommodated to them. But an attention to this circumstance will, I doubt not, contribute, with persons of real discernment, to bring us back to the original use of the words, and to the ideas originally annexed to them. I am persuaded that even now, the constant use of these terms *Christ* and *God*, as opposed to each other, has a great effect in preventing those of the common people who read the New Testament more than books of controversy, from being habitually and practically Trinitarians. There will, by this means, be a much greater difference between *God* and *Christ* in their *minds*, than they find in their *creeds*.

With respect to Ignatius, I would observe, that as you knew the genuineness of his epistles had been controverted, and by men of learning and ability, you certainly ought not from the first to have concealed that circumstance. You say, however, p. 34. "I shall appeal to them with the less
 "scruple, forasmuch as the same sincerity which
 "I ascribe to them, and which is quite sufficient
 "for my purpose, is allowed by the learned and
 "the candid Dr. Lardner.—After suggesting in no
 "very confident language, that even the smaller
 "epistles may have been tampered with by the
 "Arians, or the Orthodox, or both, he adds, *I do*
 "*not affirm that there are in them any considerable*
 "*alterations or corruptions.* If no considerable cor-
 "ruptions or alterations, certainly none respecting
 "a point of such importance as the original nature
 "of Christ."

This is curious indeed. What then could Dr. Lardner mean by these epistles having been *tampered with by the Arians, the Orthodox, or both?* If *they* interpolated them at all, it would certainly be to introduce into them passages favourable to their opinions concerning the divinity or pre-existence of Christ. How would it be worth their while, *as Arians or Orthodox*, to interpolate them for any other purpose? If a farmer, hearing of some depredation on his property committed by foxes, should say, My *corn* may have been plundered, but as the mischief has been done by *foxes*, my *geese* and my *poultry* are safe; what would be
 1
 said

said of his reasoning? Yet of the same nature is yours in this case.

These foxes have not refrained from their prey in more sacred inclosures than those of Ignatius.—Sir Isaac Newton, among others, has clearly proved that the orthodox, as they are commonly called, have, in this way, *tampered* with the New Testament itself; having made interpolations favourable to the doctrine of the trinity, especially the famous passage concerning the *three that bear record in heaven*, in the first epistle of John. This I should imagine, you yourself will acknowledge; and can you think they would spare the epistles of Ignatius, which were much more in their power?

Jortin says, “ Though the shorter epistles are on many accounts preferable to the larger, yet I will not affirm that they have undergone no alteration at all.” Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1. p. 361.

For my own part, I scruple not to say, that there never were more evident marks of interpolation in any writings than are to be found in these *genuine epistles*, as they are called, of Ignatius; though I am willing to allow, on reconsidering them, that, exclusive of manifest interpolation, there may be a ground-work of antiquity in them. The famous passage in Josephus concerning Christ is not a more evident interpolation than many in these epistles of Ignatius, which you quote with so much confidence.

You

You yourself may believe that every word now found in these epistles was actually written by Ignatius; but if they have been *tampered with*, or have undergone *alterations*, how can you quote them with so much confidence, as if the argument must necessarily have the same weight with all persons? Notwithstanding this, you say, p. 34. "I will therefore, still appeal to these epistles as sufficiently sincere to be decisive in the point in dispute. Nor shall I think myself obliged to go into the proof of their authenticity, till you have given a satisfactory reply to every part of Bishop Pearson's elaborate defence, a work which I suspect you have not yet *looked through*." And I Sir, shall save myself that trouble, till you shall have replied to every part of *Larroque's answer to this work of Pearson*; a work, which I suspect you have not *looked into*. I will, however, favour you with a sight of it, if you will gratify me with the perusal of the works of Zuicker, which, by your account, you have carefully read, though, I have not yet been able to procure them.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R III.

Of the Nazarenes, and Ebionites.

REV. SIR,

YOU still insist, p. 38. upon the *high orthodoxy* of those whom the christian Fathers call Nazarenes. "Epiphanius," you say, p. 38. "confesses that the Nazarenes held the catholic doctrine concerning the nature of our Lord," whereas, I have maintained, that, though, according to him, and some other ancient writers, there was *some* difference between them and the Ebionites, they still agreed in asserting the proper humanity of Christ. The *γνωμὴν* which distinguished the Ebionites, you say, p. 41. was something that they had borrowed not from the *Ναζωραῖοι*, the christian Nazarenes, but the *Nasareans*, a sect of Jews only. "I still abide by my assertion," you say, p. 176. "that the name of *Nazarenes* was never heard of in the church; that is, among christians themselves, before the final destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian; when it became the specific name of the Judaizers, who at that time separated from the church at Jerusalem, and settled in the North of Galilee: the name was taken from the country in which they settled."

I am really astonished that you should have the assurance to assert all this, so directly contrary to every thing that appears on the face of ecclesiastical history,
and

and which must have been borrowed from your imagination only, as I shall easily prove. I cannot raise Epiphanius himself from the dead, to solve the question concerning *his opinion*, nor do I wish to disturb the good Father's repose; but, though dead, he speaks sufficiently plain for my purpose in the following passage.

“ Wherefore the blessed John coming, and
 “ finding men employed about the humanity of
 “ Christ, and the Ebionites being in an error
 “ about the earthly genealogy of Christ, deduced
 “ from Abraham, carried by Luke as high as
 “ Adam, and finding the Cerinthians and Me-
 “ rinthians maintaining that he was a mere man,
 “ born by natural generation of both the sexes,
 “ and also the Nazarenes, and many other here-
 “ lies; as coming last (for he was the fourth to
 “ write a gospel) began as it were to call back
 “ the wanderers, and those who were employed
 “ about the humanity of Christ; and seeing some
 “ of them going into rough paths, leaving the
 “ strait and true path, cries, Whither are you
 “ going, whither are you walking, who tread a
 “ rough and dangerous path, leading to a pre-
 “ cipice? It is not so. The God, the logos,
 “ which was begotten by the Father from all
 “ eternity, is not from Mary only. He is not
 “ from the time of Joseph, he is not from the
 “ time of Salathiel and Zerobabel, and David,
 “ and Abraham, and Jacob, and Noah, and
 “ Adam; but in the beginning was the logos,
 “ and

“and the *logos* was with God, and the *logos* was God. The *was*, and the *was*, and the *was*, do not admit of his having ever not been*.”

Perhaps you will say that this testimony of Epiphanius is *forged* by me, as you charge me with respect to the same writer, p. 13. I therefore beg that you would examine the passage yourself. You will find my reference to it sufficiently exact.

After reading this passage, can any person entertain a doubt but that, in the opinion of Epiphanius at least (and, weak as he was in some things, he stands uncontradicted *in this* by any authority whatever, and his account is confirmed

* Διὸ καὶ Ἰωάννης ἐλθὼν ὁ μακάριος, καὶ εὐρὼν τὰς ἀνθρώπους πηλοποιήσας περὶ τὴν κατὰ Χριστὸν παρθεσίαν, καὶ τῶν Ἑβραίων πλανηθέντων διὰ τὴν ἐνσαρκίον Χριστοῦ γενεαλογίαν, ἀπὸ Ἀβραὰμ καταγομένην, καὶ Ἀβὴλ ἀναγομένην ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ εὐρὼν δὲ Κηρίνθιαν, καὶ Μερνιδιανὴς, ἐκ παραλήψεως αὐτὸν λεγόντας εἶναι φίλον ἀνθρώπον, καὶ τὰς Ναζωραῖας, καὶ αἰῶνας πολλὰς αἰρέσεις, ὡς καλοῦσιν ἐλθὼν, τίταρθι γὰρ εἶδος εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, ἀχέει ἀνακαλεῖσθαι, ὡς εἰπεῖν, τὰς πλανηθείσας, καὶ πηλοποιήσας περὶ τὴν κατὰ Χριστὸν παρθεσίαν, καὶ λεγὲν αὐτοῖς (ὡς καλοῦσιν ἑαίνων, καὶ ὁρῶν τινὰς εἰς τραχείας ὁδὸς κεκλιμένους καὶ ἀφέντας τὴν εὐθείαν καὶ ἀληθινὴν, ὡς εἰπεῖν) ποῖ φερεθεῖ, ποῖ βαδίζετε, οἱ τὴν τραχείαν ὁδὸν καὶ σκανδαλωδὴν καὶ εἰς χάσμα φερεσαν βαδίζοντες; ἀνακαμψάτε. Οὐκ εἰσιν υἱὸς, καὶ εἰσιν ἀπὸ Μαρίας μόνον ὁ Θεὸς λόγος, ὁ ἐκ πατρὸς ἀνὴρ γεννημένος, καὶ εἰσιν ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων Ἰωσήφ τε αὐτοῦ ὁρμασε, καὶ εἰσιν ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων Σαλαθιήλ, καὶ Ζοροβὰβήλ, καὶ Δαβὶδ, καὶ Ἀβραὰμ, καὶ Ἰακώβ, καὶ Νῶε, καὶ Ἀδὰμ, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. το δὲ ἦν, καὶ ἦ, καὶ ἦν, ἔχ' ὑποθέσθαι τε μὴ εἶναι ποῖ. Hæg. 69. sect. 23. Opera, vol. I. p. 747.

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by the most respectable ones in all antiquity) the Nazarenes were not only a sect of Jewish christians in the time of the apostles, but, together with the Ebionites, a very formidable sect, and that this sect held the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ? Did he not, as appears by this passage, consider the Nazarenes as standing in need of being taught the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, as well as the Ebionites, and the other sects that he here mentions or alludes to?

In another place this writer compares the Nazarenes to persons who, seeing a fire at a distance, and not understanding the cause, or the use of it, run towards it and burn themselves; so “these
“Jews, he says, on hearing the name of Jesus
“only, and the miracles performed by the apostles, believe on him; and knowing that he
“was born at Nazareth, and brought up in the
“house of Joseph, and that on that account he
“was called a *Nazarene* (the apostles styling him
“*a man of Nazareth, approved by miracles and*
“*mighty deeds*) imposed that name upon themselves*.” How, Sir, does this agree with this

* Ακησαίτες γὰρ μόνον ὄνομα τῆ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ θεασάμενοι τὰ θεοσημεία τὰ διὰ χειρῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων γινόμενα, καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύουσι. γινούσιν δὲ αὐτὸν ἐκ Ναζαρεθ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐγκυμονηθέντα, καὶ ἐν οἴκῳ Ἰωσήφ ἀναθρεφέντα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ Ἰησοῦν Ναζωραῖον καλεῖσθαι, ὡς καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι φασὶν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον ἄνδρα, ἀποδείδειγμένον ἐν τοῖς σημείοις καὶ τεράσι καὶ ταῖς ἐξέχουσιν; τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα ἐπίτιθεασιν αὐτοῖς, τὸ καλεῖσθαι Ναζωραῖος. Πάτ. 29. σελ. 5. Opera, vol. I. p. 120.

writer's

writer's supposing that the Nazarenes, of whom he was treating, were well instructed in the doctrine of the divinity of Christ? Also how does this agree with the late origin that you give to these Nazarenes?

You, Mr. Archdeacon, are pleased to deny the existence even of the Ebionites in the time of the apostles, contrary, I will venture to say, to the unanimous testimony of all antiquity.—Jerom, giving an account of the reasons that moved John to write his gospel, mentions the Ebionites not only as a sect, but a flourishing sect in the time of that apostle. See the following passage from his catalogue of ecclesiastical writers: “ John, the apostle, whom Jesus loved, the son of Zebedee, and brother of James, who was beheaded by Herod after the death of Christ, wrote his gospel the last of all (at the intreaty of the bishops of Asia) against Cerinthus, and other heretics, and especially the doctrine of the Ebionites, then gaining ground, who said that Christ had no being before he was born of Mary, whence he was compelled to declare his divine origin*.”—This is only one out of many authorities that I

* Joannes Apostolus quem Jesus amavit plurimum, filius Zebedæi, frater Jacobi Apostoli, quem Herodes post passionem domini decollavit, novissimus omnium, scripsit evangelium, rogatus ab Asiæ episcopis, adversus Cerinthus, aliosque hæreticos et maxime tunc Ebionitarum dogma confurgens, qui asserunt Christum ante Mariam non fuisse, unde et compulsus est divinam ejus naturam edicere. Opera, vol. I. p. 273.

could produce for this purpose, and it is not possible to produce any to the contrary.

“As a certain proof,” you say, p. 27, “that the Ebionites and Nazarenes were two distinct sects, Mosheim observes that each had its own gospel.” But in answer to this opinion of Mosheim’s, I shall give you another, which I think of equal authority, viz. that of Mr. Jeremiah Jones, with whom I find I have had the happiness to bring you acquainted; and I can introduce him with the greater confidence of his being well received, as he was as orthodox as yourself. As he is a writer intirely new to you, I shall give his whole paragraph on the subject.

“It is plain, there was a very great agreement between these two ancient sects; and though they went under different names, yet they seem only to have differed in this, that the Ebionites had made some addition to the old Nazarene system. For Origen expressly tells us, *καὶ ἑβρωναιοὶ χρηματίζεσσι οἱ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὡς Χριστὸν παραδείξαμενοι*. *They were called Ebionites who from among the Jews own Jesus to be the Christ.* And though Epiphanius seems to make their gospels different, calling one *πληρεσάλον* *most intire*, yet this need not move us. For if the learned Casaubon’s conjecture should not be right, that we should read the same, viz. *« πληρεσάλον* in both places (which yet is very probable for any thing Father Simon has proved
“to

“to the contrary) yet will the difficulty be all removed at once by this single consideration, that Epiphanius never saw any gospel of the Nazarenes; for though he calls it *πληρεσζον*, yet he himself says, *κη οιδα δε ει κη τας γενεαλογιας περιειλον*, that he did not know whether they had taken away the genealogy, as the Ebionites had done; i. e. having never seen the Nazarene gospel, for ought he knew it might be the very same with that of the Ebionites, as indeed it most certainly was.” *On the Canon*, vol. I. p. 386.

As I have perceived that the opinion of the moderns has sometimes great weight with you, I shall transcribe part of a note of the learned translator of Mosheim on this subject. “This gospel,” he says, vol. I. p. 173. “which was called indiscriminately the gospel of the Nazarenes, or Hebrews, is certainly the same with the gospel of the Ebionites, the gospel of the twelve apostles,” &c. and, after referring to other authors, he says, “the reader will, however, find a still more accurate and satisfactory account of this gospel, in the first volume of the learned and judicious Mr. Jones’s incomparable method of settling the canonical authority of the New Testament.”

But in my opinion Jerom has sufficiently decided this question against you. Could he have had any other idea than that these two sects (if

they were properly two) used the same gospel, when he said, “in the gospel used by the Nazarenes and Ebionites, which is commonly called “the authentic gospel of Matthew, which I lately “translated from Hebrew into Greek*,” &c.

You farther say, p. 71. “the Ebionites acknowledged no part of the Old Testament but “the Pentateuch, nor the whole of that; and “therefore that Hegesippus citing the Proverbs “of Solomon, by a title which implies his acknowledgment of that book, is a proof that he “was not an Ebionite.” I know of no sufficient evidence that the Ebionites did not acknowledge the authority of all that we call the canonical books of the Old Testament. Symmachus, whose translation of the scriptures into Greek is so often quoted, and with the greatest approbation by the fathers, was an Ebionite, and Jerom says the same of Theodotion. They both translated the other books of the Old Testament, as well as the Pentateuch, and as far as appears, without making any distinction between that and the other books; and can this be thought probable, if they had not considered them as intitled to equal credit? Besides, our Saviour’s acknowledgment of the authority of the whole of the Old Testament is so express, that I cannot readily

* In Evangelio quo utuntur Nazareni et Ebionitæ, quod nuper in Græcum de Hebræo sermone transfulimus, et quod vocatur plerisque Matthæi authenticum, &c. in Matt. xii. 13. Opera, vol. vi. p. 21.

believe

believe that any christians, Jews especially, acknowledging his authority, would reject what he admitted.

What you say can be only on the authority of Epiphanius, and that, you ought to have known is in effect contradicted by Irenæus, who says, that “the Ebionites expounded the prophecies “too curiously. *Quæ autem sunt prophetica curiosius exponere nituntur*, lib. I. cap. 26.—Grabe says, that Ebion wrote an exposition of the prophets, as he collected from some fragments of the work, of which he gives some account in his note on the place. By *Ebion* we may understand some *Ebionite*; for I much doubt the existence of such a person as Ebion, the Ebionites being mentioned long before the name Ebion occurs in ecclesiastical writers.

It is an argument in favour of the identity of the Nazarenes and Ebionites, that the former are not mentioned *by name* by any writer who likewise speaks of the Ebionites before Epiphanius, though the people so called afterwards were certainly known before his time. The term *Ebionites* occurs in Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius; but none of them make any mention of *Nazarenes*; and yet it cannot be denied, that they must have been even more considerable in the time of these writers than they were afterwards; for, together with the Ebionites (if there was any difference between them) they dwindled

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away,

away, till, in the time of Austin, they were *admodum pauci*, very few.

Origen must have meant to include those who were called Nazarenes under the appellation of Ebionites, because he speaks of the Ebionites as being the whole body of Jewish christians; and the Nazarenes were christian Jews as well as they. Jerom seems to use the two terms promiscuously; and in the passage of his letter to Austin, so often quoted in this controversy, I cannot help thinking he makes them to be the same.

The conduct of these writers is easily accounted for, on the supposition of the Jewish christians having been first known to the Gentiles by the name of Ebionites only, before the appellation of Nazarenes (by which they had been distinguished by their unbelieving brethren) came to be generally known abroad. It must be more particularly difficult, on your principles, to account for the conduct of Eusebius, whose business, as an historian, it certainly was to have noticed the Nazarenes, if they had been different from the Ebionites, whom he has mentioned; and even you allow them to have had their rise in the time of Adrian, whose expedition against the Jews he particularly mentions.

On this subject of the Ebionites, I must take some notice of what you say in defence of Eusebius, who says, that Theodorus was the first who taught the doctrine of the humanity of Christ. You still maintain,

tain, without the least shadow of authority for it, that he carried the doctrine farther than the Ebionites had ever done; whereas, you cannot possibly produce any evidence whatever of Theodotus having been considered by the ancients in a worse light than the Ebionites.

“It is very certain,” you say, p. 131. “that Theodotus maintained the mere humanity of Christ in the grossest sense; in that gross and shocking sense in which it is at this day taught by yourself and Mr. Lindsey. It is not certain that the Ebionites before Theodotus had gone farther than to deny our Lord’s original divinity. They probably, like Socinus, admitted some unintelligible exaltation of his nature after his resurrection, which rendered him the object of worship.” You also say, p. 87. “I deny that the unitarian doctrine existed in that time” (the age of the apostles) “in the most obnoxious form. Produce your indisputable evidence. Observe, that by the most obnoxious form, I understand that form which excludes the worship of Christ.”

By *the most obnoxious form*, I meant the belief that Jesus was the son of Joseph as well as of Mary. That such persons existed in the age of the apostles, no person, I believe, except yourself, ever denied; and there is no reason whatever to believe that these Ebionites, or any Ebionites, ever considered Christ as a proper object of worship. Your idea of their entertaining the notion of an *unintelligible exaltation*

tion of his mere human nature after his resurrection, is the most improbable of all suppositions. According to all the accounts we have of the Ebionites, they were not apt to admit things unintelligible.

The case of Socinus is very different from that of the Ebionites. He had been educated in the habit of praying to Christ, and therefore might not be able to reject the practice; but the Ebionites began with considering Jesus as a *mere man*, and therefore, would no more think of paying worship to him, than they had done to Moses, without very express instructions and directions, which it is not in your power to produce, with respect either to them, or to christians in general.

Your notion that the Nazarenes were the orthodox Jews who separated from the church of Jerusalem in the time of Adrian, and settled in the north of Galilee, and that they had their name from the place where they then settled, viz. Nazareth, will, I doubt not, be quite new to every reader of ecclesiastical history, and (excepting the first of these particulars, which I suppose you learned of Mosheim, who neither quotes, nor, I will venture to say, could quote any authority for it) an invention of your own. The Nazarenes, in the time of the apostles, are well known to have had their name from Nazareth where Jesus had lived, and from which he had been usually called *Jesus of Nazareth*; but as to the Nazarenes of the christian Fathers, there is no evidence whatever of their having ever settled at

Nazareth,

Nazareth, or in any part of Galilee. Jerom places the Nazarenes with whom he was acquainted (and he was well acquainted with the Nazarenes) in Beræa, in Syria. *Catalogus Virorum Illustrium*, in *Matt. Opera*, vol. I. p. 267.

You say that the Nazarenes were unknown as a sect before the destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian, but Epiphanius, in perfect agreement with all the ancients, places their rise after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. After mentioning the places where they resided, viz. Beræa, Coele-Syria, Pella, and Cocabe (observe he says nothing of any of them being in *Nazareth*, from which you suppose they had their name) he says, “There was their origin after the destruction of Jerusalem, when all the disciples lived at Pella; Christ having warned them to leave Jerusalem, and retire at the approach of the siege; and on this account they lived, as I said in Peræa. Thence the sect of the Nazarenes had its origin*.”

As to the passage in Jerom from which I, after Suicer, inferred that the Ebionites and the Nazarenes were the same people, or only differed in

* Εκκειθεν πιν η αρχη γεγνε μελα την ατο των Ιεροσολυμων μελασασιν, παντων των μαθητων των εν Πελλη ωκηστων, χρισκ ησαντος καταλειψαι τα Ιεροσολυμα, η αναχωρησαι επειδη ημελλε παρειν πολιορκιαν. η εκ της τοιαυτης υποθεσεως την Περαιαν ωκησαντες, εκεισε ως εφην διστριβον. εντευθην η κατα της Ναζωραιας αιρεσις εχε την αρχην. *Har.* 29. *Opera*, vol. I. p 123.

some

some things of little moment (but which you and Mr. Badcock think is a *demonstration* that they were fundamentally different) I see no reason to be dissatisfied with my interpretation of it. You think it is a proof of my ignorance of Latin ; whereas, if I thought myself at liberty to do it, I could produce in my favour as high a classical authority as any that this country can furnish.

How could Jerom call these highly orthodox Jews, as you suppose them to be, *not christians*, merely because they used the ceremonies of the law of Moses ? He might have pitied them for their weakness, but he would hardly have condemned them as *no christians*.

Your own representation of them is not very unfavourable. You say, p. 49. " The christian " Nazarenes had nothing in their conduct that " might render them deserving of this epithet " (*ανομος*, *lawless*.) Their error was that they " feared to use their liberty, not that they abused " it." You therefore must think his censure very harsh and ill-applied.

I think it probable that the Nazarenes or Ebionites were considered as in a state of excommunication, not merely because they themselves observed the law of Moses, but because many of them would impose the same on the Gentiles, so that, in fact, they excommunicated themselves ; and thus the passage in Jerom will
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be explained by one in Justin (who says, that he could communicate with those Jews who kept to the law of Moses, but not with those who would impose it on all christians) which I shall have occasion to quote hereafter.

As to Mr. Badcock's inference from the passage in Austin's letter in answer to Jerom, I see no force in it at all. He only enumerates all the names that Jerom had mentioned, and whether these differences were real or nominal, great or little, it signified nothing to him. He himself, in his catalogue of heresies, makes a difference between the Ebionites and Nazarenes, but by no means that which you and Mr. Badcock make; and as it was a common opinion, especially in the West, that there was some difference between them (though the writers who speak of it could never be certain in what it consisted) it was very natural in Austin to mention them separately, whether Jerom had made them the same or not.

That Austin, in his answer to Jerom, did not consider the Nazarenes in any very favourable light, is evident from his speaking of them as *heretics*. "Quid putaverint hæretici, qui dum volunt et Judæi esse et christiani, nec Judæi esse nec Christiani esse potuerunt," &c. Opera vol. II. p. 75. i. e. "as to the opinion of those heretics, who while they would be both Jews and christians, can neither be Jews nor christians," &c. It is in these very words that
Jerom

Jerom had characterized those whom he had called *Nazarenes*. What more could Austin have said of the Ebionites? And can it be supposed that he would have spoke of the Nazarenes in this manner, if he had thought them *highly orthodox* with respect to the doctrine of the trinity? especially considering that it was an age in which the greatest account was made of that doctrine; so that soundness in that article might be supposed to have atoned for defects in other things.

You say you are not singular, as I had supposed in asserting the strict orthodoxy of the Nazarenes in opposition to the Ebionites; but you are more nearly so than you imagine.—

“Hugo Grotius,” you say, p. 38. “Vossius
“Spencer, and Huetius, agree that the Nazarenes and Ebionites, though sometimes confounded, were distinct sects, and they maintain
“the opinion which I now maintain of the high
“orthodoxy of the proper Nazarenes in the
“article of our Lord’s divinity.”

Having examined the most respectable of these authorities, viz. Grotius, I find him intirely failing you, and saying no such thing as you ascribe to him. What he says is as follows:

“Certe Nazaræi illi Beræenses genuina erant
“propago eorum qui primi ex Palestina Christi
“fidem erant amplexi. Nam id illis nomen
“primitus fuisse inditum ex domini nostri nomine,
“mine, qui vulgo Nazarenus vocabatur, apparet

ex

“ ex Act. xxiv. 5. Opera, vol. II. p. 4. i. e.
 “ Those Beræan Nazarenes were the genuine
 “ descendants of those who first in Palestine em-
 “ braced the christian faith ; for that this name
 “ was originally given them from the name of
 “ our Saviour, who was commonly called *the*
 “ *Nazarene*, appears from Acts xxiv. 5.”

This, Sir, is nothing more than I have repeatedly said myself, viz. that the Nazarenes mentioned by the primitive fathers were the genuine descendants of the Nazarenes in the time of Paul. Grotius says nothing definite about their opinions ; but if his meaning must be interpreted by his own opinion on the subject, it would, I presume, be in my favour ; for it is allowed, I believe, on all hands, that his Commentary on the New Testament is very much Socinian, certainly not Athanasian. But admitting that you may have more modern authorities for the orthodoxy of the Nazarenes than I had imagined (though I believe that a great majority are with me on this subject) the only authorities that are of any weight are the ancients, and we are now upon ground that appears to me not to have been sufficiently examined by any of the moderns.

Rather than tax me with ignorance of the sentiments of modern critics on this subject (which you are sometimes ready enough to do) you suppose that I was acquainted with them, and had recourse to *artifice*. “ Your attempt,”
 you

you say, p. 38. "to set it forth in that light I cannot but consider as a stratagem, which you were willing to employ for the preservation of your battered citadel, the argument from the Nazarenes. In this stratagem, if I mistake not, you are completely foiled. In your fallies against the batteries which I have raised, I trust you will be little more successful. But as too much of stratagem is apt to mix itself with all your operations, it will be necessary that I watch very narrowly the manner of your approaches."

This argument, however, is not so much *battered* but that it will well hold out against all your efforts to overturn it. The Nazarenes, as well as the Ebionites, the genuine descendants of the old Jewish christians, and who cannot be proved to have departed from the faith of their ancestors, were all believers in the simple humanity of Christ; and certainly the presumption is that they learned this doctrine from the apostles. For who else were their teachers?

At the close of this subject, having, as you think, a manifest advantage over me, in answer to my saying that if the Jewish christians were universally Ebionites in the time of Origen, the probability is that they were very generally so in the time of the apostles; you say, p. 62. "Whence should this probability arise? From this general maxim, it seems, that whole bodies of men do not soon change their opinions. You are, indeed,

“indeed, Sir, the very last person who might
 “have been expected to form conclusions upon
 “an historical question from mere theory, in
 “defiance of the experience of mankind, in de-
 “fiance of the experience of our own country,
 “and our own times. How long is it since the
 “whole body of Dissenters in this kingdom (the
 “single sect of the Quakers excepted) took their
 “standard of orthodoxy from the opinions of
 “Calvin? Where shall we now find a Dissenter,
 “except perhaps among the dregs of Methodism,
 “who would not think it an affront to be taken
 “for a Calvinist?”

Indeed, Sir, you are peculiarly unfortunate with respect to this example, and ought to have been better informed before you had delivered your opinion of a matter of fact, in the present state of things, and at home, with so much confidence. The fact you appeal to is notoriously the very reverse of what you represent it to be, and is one among many strong proofs of the truth of my general maxim.

It is so far from being true that there are few Dissenters who would not think it an affront to be taken for Calvinists, that the great body of them would be exceedingly offended if they were called by any other name. This is notorious. Your learned good and able ally Mr. Badcock, of whom you boast so much, p. 77, 78. has served two congregations of Dissenters, both professedly calvinistical, and in the
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highest degree. He himself ranks with that class; having now, as I am informed, no communion or connexion with those who are usually called *rational Dissenters*. I appeal to himself, and his present congregation at South-Molton, as well as his former at Barnstable, for the truth of the fact.

We Dissenters are much better situated than you are for judging of the truth of my general maxim, viz. that large bodies of men do not soon change their opinions. Notwithstanding the Dissenters have no legal bonds, but are perfectly free to adopt whatever opinions they please; yet, as they were universally Calvinists at the time of the reformation, they are very generally so still. The ministers, as might be expected, are the most enlightened, and have introduced some reformation among the common people; but a majority of the ministers are, I believe, still Calvinists.

I should have thought that no person at all acquainted with history could have entertained a doubt with respect to the general maxim that you refer to, viz. that great bodies of men do not soon change their opinions. Did it not appear when our Saviour and the apostles preached the gospel with all the advantage of miracles; and did it not appear in the christianizing of the Gentile world? I need not inform you how long the ignorant country people in particular continued *pagans*, a word borrowed from their being chiefly
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the inhabitants of villages. Does not the history both of the corruption and of the reformation of christianity prove the same thing? How many yet believe the doctrine of transubstantiation? and what I think as much a case in point, how many yet believe the doctrine of the trinity? Had it not been for the force of this maxim, we should not have found an archdeacon of St. Albans employing the moderate share of learning that he is possessed of in the defence of a tenet so palpably absurd.

You seem, Sir, to speak with contempt of the doctrines of Calvin. I must, however, remind you, that the doctrinal articles of your church are Calvinistic. If you, therefore, be a true member of the church of England, believing *ex animo*, and in their plain obvious sense, all the thirty-nine articles, you yourself believe the doctrines of original sin, predestination, and every other tenet that is generally known by the name of *Calvinistic*. I do not tax you, as you repeatedly do me, with *insincerity*. I presume you really *do* believe the doctrines that are termed Calvinistic, and therefore I think you ought to have treated them with more respect. You ought also to have spoken with more respect of the Methodists. They, as well as you, are professed members of the church of England, and not Dissenters.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

Of the supposed orthodox Jewish church at Jerusalem, and of the veracity of Origen.

REV. SIR.

YOU speak of a church of trinitarian Jews, who had abandoned the law of Moses, and resided at Jerusalem, subsequent to the time of Adrian. Origen, who asserts that all the Jewish christians of his time conformed to the law of Moses, you say, must have known of this church, and therefore you do not hesitate, after Mosheim, to tax him with asserting a wilful falsehood. Error was often ascribed to this great man by the later fathers, but never before, I believe, was his *veracity* called in question. And least of all can it be supposed that he would have dared to assert a notorious untruth in a public controversy. He must have been a fool, as well as the knave you make him, to have ventured upon it. Your treatment of myself, however, gives me the less pain, when I see you not scrupling to fix a similar odium on the character of the respectable Origen. But what, Sir, would you not have said of me, if I had been reduced to this dilemma, in order to maintain my opinion? What an outcry did not you and Mr. Badcock make when I disputed the evidence

evidence of Eusebius, though I could confute him from himself *; and with respect to *integrity*, the character of Eusebius never stood so high as that of Origen. But you, or rather your author Mosheim, shall be heard.

“I shall take,” you say, p. 59. “what you may think a bold step. I shall tax the veracity of your witness,—of this Origen. I shall tell you that, whatever may be the general credit of his character, yet in this business the particulars of his deposition are to be little regarded, when he sets out with the allegation of a notorious falsehood. He alleges of the Hebrew christians in general, that they had not renounced the Mosaic law. The assertion served him for an answer to the invective which Celsus had put in the mouth of a Jew against the converted Jews, as deserters of the laws and customs of their ancestors. The answer was not the worse for wanting truth, if his heathen antagonist was not sufficiently informed in the true distinctions of christian sects to detect the falsehood. But in all the time which he spent in Palestine, had Origen never conversed

* Pearson makes no difficulty of contradicting Eusebius in this case, and without making any apology for him at all. His opponent Mr. Daillé having said *if that account be true*, he replies, “He knew very well, that, strictly speaking, it was not true; for he knew many others long before Theodotus, and not a few even before Ignatius, who taught the same heresy, a catalogue of whom may be seen in Epiphanius,” and whom he proceeds to mention. *Vindiciæ*, lib. II. cap. ii. p. 24.

“ with Hebrew christians of another sort ? Had he
 “ met with no christians of Hebrew families of the
 “ church of Jerusalem, when that church was under
 “ the government of bishops of the uncircumcision ?
 “ The fact is, that after the demolition of Jerusalem
 “ by Adrian, the majority of the Hebrew christians,
 “ who must have passed for Jews with the Roman
 “ magistrates, had they continued to adhere to the
 “ Mosaic law, which to this time, they had observed
 “ more from habit, than from any principle of con-
 “ science, made no scruple to renounce it, that they
 “ might be qualified to partake in the valuable pri-
 “ vileges of the Ælian colony, from which Jews
 “ were excluded. Having thus divested them-
 “ selves of the form of Judaism, which to that
 “ time they had born, they removed from Pella, and
 “ other towns to which they had retired, and settled
 “ in great numbers at Ælia. The few who re-
 “ tained a superstitious veneration for their laws,
 “ remained in the North of Galilee, where they
 “ were joined, perhaps, by new fugitives of the
 “ same weak character from Palestine. And this
 “ was the beginning of the sect of the Nazarenes.
 “ But from this time, whatever Origen may pretend,
 “ to serve a purpose, the majority of the Hebrew
 “ christians forsook their law, and lived in commu-
 “ nion with the gentile bishops of the new mo-
 “ delled church at Jerusalem ; for the name was
 “ retained, though Jerusalem was no more ; and
 “ the seat of the bishop was at Ælia. All this I
 “ affirm with the less hesitation, being supported by
 “ the authority of Mosheim, from whom, indeed,
 “ I first

“ I first learned to rate the testimony of Origen, in
 “ this particular question, at its true value.”

Struck with this extraordinary narration, of a transaction of ancient times, for which you refer to no authority besides that of Mosheim, I looked into him; but even there I do not find all the particulars that you mention. He says nothing of the Jewish christians having observed their law more from habit than any principle of conscience; nothing of their making no scruple to renounce their law, in order to partake in the privileges of the Ælian colony; nothing of any Jewish christians removing from Pella and settling in Ælia; nothing of the retiring of the rest to the North of Galilee; or of this new origin of the Nazarenes there. For all these particulars, therefore, learned Sir, you must have some other authority *in petto*, besides that of Mosheim; and you ought to have produced it.

Also, as you adopt the assertions of Mosheim, I could wish to know his authority for supposing, that there was any such thing as a church, or part of a church, of Jewish christians at Jerusalem, after the destruction of that city by Adrian. As to your *additions*, they are a series of such improbable circumstances, as hardly any historian of the time could make credible. Bodies of men do not, whatever you may imagine, suddenly change their opinions, and much less their customs and habits: least of all would an act of *violence* produce that effect;

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and, of all mankind, the experiment was the least likely to answer with Jews. If it had produced any effect for a time, the old customs and habits would certainly have returned when the danger was over. You might just as well suppose that all the Jews in Jerusalem began to speak Greek, as well as abandoned their ancient customs, in order to enjoy the valuable privileges of the Ælian colony. And you would have this to alledge in your favour, that from that time the bishops of Jerusalem were all Greeks, the public offices were, no doubt, performed in the Greek language; and the church of Jerusalem was, indeed, in all respects, as much a Greek church, as that of Antioch.

As you say, p. 134. with respect to myself, "that a man ought to be accomplished in ancient learning, who thinks he may escape with impunity, and without detection, in the attempt to brow-beat the world with a peremptory and reiterated allegation of testimonies that exist not;" how much more accomplished ought that man to be, who now writes the history of transactions in the third century without alledging any testimony at all?

Mosheim himself, who began this accusation of Origen, produces no authority, in his Dissertations, for his assertion. He only says that he cannot reconcile the fact that Origen mentions, with his seeming unwillingness to allow the Ebionites to be christians. But this is easily accounted for,

for, from the attachment which he himself had to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, which they denied; and from their holding no communion with other christians.

All the appearance of authority that I can find in any ancient writer, of the Jewish christians deserting the law of their ancestors, is in Sulpicius Severus, to whom I am referred by Mosheim in his history. But what he says on the subject, is only what follows: “ At this time Adrian, thinking that he should destroy christianity by destroying the place, erected the images of dæmons in the church, and in the place of our Lord’s sufferings; and because the christians were thought to consist chiefly of Jews (for then the church at Jerusalem had all its clergy of the circumcision) ordered a cohort of soldiers to keep constant guard, and drive all Jews from any access to Jerusalem, which was of service to the christian faith; for at that time they almost all believed Christ to be God, but with the observance of the law; the Lord so disposing it, that the servitude of the law should be removed from the liberty of the faith, and of the church. Then was Marc the first bishop of the Gentiles at Jerusalem *.”

Where,

* Qua tempestate Adrianus, existimans se christianam fidem loci injuria perempturum, et in templo ac loco dominicæ passionis dæmonum simulachra constituit. Et quia christiani ex Judæis potissimum putabantur (namque tum Hierosolymæ non nisi ex circumcisione habebat ecclesia Sacerdotem) militum

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Where, Sir, do you find, in this passage, any promise of immunities to the Jewish christians, if they would forsake the law of their fathers. On the contrary, the historian says, that the object of Adrian was to overturn Christianity, and that the Jews were banished because the christians then were chiefly of that nation. According to this account, all the Jews, christians as well as others, were driven out of Jerusalem; and nothing is said of any of them forsaking the law of Moses; and your assertion of their having been gradually prepared for it, by having before this time observed their law more from habit than from conscience, is unsupported by any authority or probability. Eusebius mentions the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem, but says not a word of any of the christians there abandoning circumcision, and their other ceremonies on that occasion. Indeed, such a thing was in the highest degree improbable.

Independent of all natural probability, had Sulpitius Severus actually written all that Mosheim advances, and all the curious particulars that you have added to complete the account;

cohortem custodias in perpetuum agitare jussit, quæ Judæos omnes Hierosolymæ aditus arceret. Quod quidem christianæ fidei proficiebat; quia tum pene omnes Christum Deum sub legis observatione credebant, Nimirum id domino ordinante dispositum, ut legis servitus a libertate fidei atque ecclesiæ tolleretur. Ita tum primum Marcus ex Gentibus apud Hierosolymam episcopus fuit. Hist. lib. II. c. xxxi. p. 245.

whether

whether is it, Sir, from this writer, or from Origen, that we are more likely to gain true information on this subject. Origen writing in controversy, and of course subject to correction, appeals to a fact as notorious in the country in which he himself resided, and in his own times, to which therefore he could not but have given particular attention. Whereas Sulpitius Severus lived in the remotest part of Gaul, several thousand miles from Palestine, and two hundred years after Origen, so that he could not have asserted the fact as from his own knowledge, and he quotes no other person for it. But in fact Sulpitius Severus is no more favourable to your account of the matter than Origen himself; so that to the authority of both of them, of all ancient testimony, and natural probability, you have nothing to oppose but your own conjectures, and nothing to plead for this conduct but that your poor and wretched cause requires it.

Having consulted Eusebius, and other ancient writers to no purpose, for some account of these Jews who had deserted the religion of their ancestors, I looked into Tillemont, who is wonderfully careful and exact in bringing together every thing that relates to his subject; but his account of the matter differs widely indeed from Mosheim's and yours. He says (*Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. II. part. ii. p. 506.) "The Jews
 2 "cepted

“ cepted by Adrian from the prohibition to con-
“ tinue at Jerusalem. They were obliged to go
“ out with the rest. But the Jews being then
“ obliged to abandon Jerusalem, that church
“ began to be composed of Gentiles ; and before
“ the death of Adrian, in the middle of the year
“ 138, Marc, who was of Gentile race, was esta-
“ blished their bishop.” He does not say with
Mosheim that this Marc was chosen by the
“ Jews who abandoned the Mosaic rites.” Hist.
vol. I. p. 172.

Fleury, I find, had the same idea of that event.
He says, Hist. vol. I. p. 316. “ From this time
“ the Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem, or
“ even to see it at a distance. The city being
“ afterwards inhabited by Gentiles, had no other
“ name than *Ælia*.—Hitherto the church of
“ Jerusalem had only been composed of Jewish
“ converts, who observed the ritual of the law
“ under the liberty of the gospel ; but then as
“ the Jews were forbidden to remain there, and
“ guards were placed to defend the entrance of
“ it, there were no other christians there besides
“ those who were of Gentile origin ; and thus
“ the remains of the servitude of the law were
“ entirely abolished.”

Thus ends this church of orthodox Jewish
christians at Jerusalem, planted by Mosheim, and
pretty well watered by the Archdeacon of St.
Albans ;

Albans; from which you have derived such great advantage to your argument. But what evidence can you bring that the ancient Jewish church at Jerusalem, even before the time of Adrian, was trinitarian? If they were *Nazarenes*, Epiphanius represents them as unitarian when John wrote; and who was it that converted them from unitarians to trinitarians, and what evidence have you of any such conversion?

What became of the christian Jews who were driven out of Jerusalem by Adrian, does not appear. It is most probable that they joined their brethren at Pella, or Beræa, in Syria, from which they had come to reside at Jerusalem, and, indeed, what became of the whole body of the ancient christian Jews (none of whom can be proved to have been trinitarians) I cannot tell. Their numbers, we may suppose, were gradually reduced, till at length they became extinct. I hope, however, we shall hear no more of them as an evidence of the antiquity of the trinitarian doctrine.

I cannot help, in this place, taking some farther notice of what you say with respect to this charge of a wilful falsehood on Origen. "Time was," you say, p. 160. "when the practice" (viz. of using unjustifiable means to serve a good end) "was openly avowed, and Origen himself was among its defenders." This, Sir, as is usual with you, is much too strongly stated, and as you mention no authorities, you might think to escape detection. I believe,

I believe, indeed, you went no farther than Mosheim for it. Jerom, in his epistle to Pammachius, Opera, vol. I. p. 496. says, that Origen adopted the Platonic doctrine (and you, Sir, are an admirer of Plato) of the subserviency of truth to utility, as with respect to deceiving enemies, &c. as Mr. Hume, and other speculative moralists have done; considering the foundation of all social virtue to be the public good. But, Sir, it by no means follows from this, that such persons will ever indulge themselves in any greater violations of truth than those who hold other speculative opinions concerning the foundation of morals.

Jerom was far from saying as you do, that “he reduced his theory to practice.” He mentions no instance whatever of his having recourse to it, and is far, indeed, from vindicating you in asserting, p. 160. that “the art which he recommended he scrupled not to employ; and that, to silence an adversary, he had recourse to the wilful and deliberate allegation of a notorious falsehood.” Here, Sir, is much more in the conclusion than the premises will warrant. Many persons hold speculative principles, which their adversaries think must necessarily lead to immorality; but those who hold them should be heard on the subject; and the conclusion will not be just, unless they themselves connect immoral practices with their principles. I find, Sir, that the characters of the *dead* are no safer in your hands than those of the *living*. I am unwilling to say a harsh thing, and I wish to avoid it the more, lest

lest I should be thought *to return railing for railing*; but really, unless you can make a better apology for yourself, than I am able to suggest, you will be considered by impartial persons, as a *falsifier of history*, and a *defamer of the character of the dead*, in order to serve your purpose.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R V.

Of Heresy in the earliest times.

REV. SIR,

I Asserted that the unitarians were not originally considered as *heretics*, and for this I have adduced a variety of arguments, one of the principal of which is, that the apostle John, though, according to all the evidence of antiquity, he could not but have known that unitarians were numerous in his time, never censures them; whereas he writes with the greatest indignation against the tenets which belonged to the opposite system of Gnosticism. I observed the same with respect to Hegesippus, Justin Martyr, and Clemens Alexandrinus. I now find the same to be true of Polycarp and Ignatius, and that

that even Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen, did not treat the unitarians as heretics.

You insist upon it, however, that John does censure the unitarian doctrine; which is curious enough, when, according to your account, there were no Ebionites or Nazarenes, that is, none who denied the pre-existence of Christ, till long after the time of John. But, passing this, you acknowledge that the phrase *coming in the flesh* alludes to the proper humanity of Christ, and therefore respects the Gnostics; but you maintain that it likewise alludes to a *prior state*; so that we may necessarily infer from it, that he was a being of a higher rank before his coming in the flesh.

You say, p. 27. "The attempt to assign a reason why the Redeemer should be a man, implies both that he might have been, without partaking of the human nature, and by consequence that, in his own proper nature, he was originally something different from man; and that there might have been an expectation that he would make his appearance in some form above the human." But it is certainly quite sufficient to account for the apostle's using that phrase *coming in the flesh*, that in his time there actually existed an opinion that Christ was not truly a man, but was a being of a higher order, which was precisely the doctrine of the Gnostics. That before the appearance of the Messiah, any persons

persons expected that he would, or might come in a form above the human I absolutely deny.

“ A reason,” you say, p. 27, “ why a man should
 “ be a man, one would not expect in a sober man’s
 “ discourse.” But certainly, it was very proper to
 give a reason why one who was *not* thought to be
 properly a man, was really so ; which is what the
 apostle has done.

As you call upon me so loudly to give any proof
 that the phrase *coming in the flesh* is descriptive of
 the Gnostic heresy only, and not of the unitarian
 doctrine also, I shall give an answer that may per-
 haps satisfy you, which is, that it is so used in the
 epistle of Polycarp, the disciple of John. In a
 passage in this epistle, in which the writer evidently
 alludes to the Gnostics only, he introduces this
 very phrase, *coming in the flesh*. See sect. vi. vii. in
 Abp. Wake’s translation, p. 55. “ Being zealous
 “ of what is good, abstaining from all offence,
 “ and from false brethren, and from those who
 “ bear the name of Christ in hypocrisy, and who
 “ deceive vain men. For whosoever does not con-
 “ fess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, he is
 “ Antichrist, and whosoever does not confess his
 “ suffering upon the cross is from the devil ; and
 “ whosoever perverts the oracles of God to his
 “ own interests, and says, that there shall be neither
 “ any resurrection, nor judgment, he is the first-
 “ born of satan. Wherefore, leaving the vanity
 “ of many, and their false doctrines, let us return

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“ to

“to the word that was delivered from the beginning.”

Had this writer proceeded no farther than the second clause, in which he mentions those who did not believe that Christ suffered upon the cross, it might have been supposed, that he alluded to *two* classes of men, and that the latter were different from those who denied that he came in the flesh. But as he goes on to mention a third circumstance, viz. the denial of the resurrection, and we are sure that those were not a third class of persons, it is evident that he alluded to no more than one and the same kind of persons by all the three characters. I conclude, therefore, that the apostle John, from whom the writer of this epistle had this phrase, used it in the same sense, and meant by it only those persons who believed that Christ was not truly man, i. e. the Gnostics.

Besides, is it not extraordinary, that if this apostle conceived the indignation that you suppose him to have entertained against the unitarians, he should give no intimation of it except in this one ambiguous expression? You own that he marks the Gnostics clearly enough, and expresses the strongest aversion to them. How came he then to spare the unitarians, who have been so odious since? You must own that, in the course of his gospel, he inserts many expressions which, when literally interpreted, militate strongly against the doctrine of the divinity of Christ; as when, according to him,

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our Saviour says *the Father is greater than I; I can do nothing of myself; I live by the Father; the Father within me he doth the works. The Father is the only true God, &c.* If the apostle knew that there were in his time those who believed that Christ was a mere man, while he himself believed him to be God, is it not extraordinary that he should give them such an advantage from the language of our Saviour in his own gospel; and that he should have taken no care to qualify or explain it? Persons who are aware of a dangerous opinion, and wish to guard others against it, do not write as he does.

You will probably say, that John taught the divinity of Christ with sufficient clearness in the introduction to his gospel, which might serve as a guard against any mistake with respect to such expressions as those above quoted. But it appears that the ancient unitarians understood that introduction as we now do, taking the *logos* to mean not *Christ*, but the *wisdom and power of God* residing in him, and acting by him. The Noetian, in Hippolytus, says, "You tell me something new, "when you call the Son *logos* *." And the oldest opinion on the subject is, that in that introduction John alluded to the Gnostics only, as he did in his epistles.

* ΑΛΛ' ἔπει μοι τις, ξέρον μοι φερῆς λόγον λεγών υἱόν.
 Contra Noetum, sect. xv. p. 16.

Ignatius also frequently mentions *beresy*, and *beretics*, and, like John and Polycarp, with great indignation; but it is evident to every person who is at all acquainted with the history, learning, and language of those times, and of the subsequent ones, that he had no persons in his eye but the Gnostics only. I desire no other evidence of this, besides a careful inspection of the passages. I shall recite only one of them, from the epistle to the Smyr-næans, sect. iv. v. in Wake's translation, p. 116. Speaking of his own sufferings, he says, "he
 " who was made a perfect man strengthening me.
 " Whom some not knowing do deny, or rather
 " have been denied by him, being the advocates
 " of death, rather than of the truth, whom neither
 " the prophets, nor the law of Moses have per-
 " suaded, nor the gospel itself, even to this day,
 " nor the sufferings of every one of us. For they
 " think also the same things of us. For what does
 " a man profit me if he shall praise me, and blas-
 " pheme my Lord, not confessing that he was
 " truly made a man. Now he that doth not say
 " this, does in effect deny him, and is in death.
 " But for the names of such as do this, they being
 " unbelievers, I thought it not fitting to write them
 " unto you. Yea God forbid that I should make
 " any mention of them till they shall repent, to a
 " true belief of Christ's passion, which is our re-
 " surrection. Let no man deceive himself," &c.
 He afterwards speaks of these persons abstaining from the eucharist, and the public offices, " because
 I " they

“ they confessed not the eucharist to be the flesh of
 “ our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our
 “ sins, and which the Father of his goodness raised
 “ again from the dead. It will, therefore,” he
 adds, “ become you to abstain from such persons,
 “ and not to speak with them, neither in private
 “ nor in public.”

How like is this to the writings of the apostle John, and how well they explain each other. Here we see the *blasphemy* ascribed to the Gnostics, which Justin mentions, their separating themselves from the communion of christians, their denying the resurrection, and their pride. Now, how came this writer, like John, never to censure the unitarians, if he had thought them to be heretics? That they existed in his time, there never was a doubt, except what is just started in this last publication of yours. It can only be accounted for on the supposition that he himself, as well as the apostle John, were unitarians, and that they had no idea of any *heresies* besides those of the different kinds of Gnostics.

Pearson says, that Ignatius refers to the doctrine of the Ebionites in his epistle to Polycarp, and in those to the Ephesians, the Magnesians, and the Philadelphians; but I find no such references in them, except perhaps two passages which may easily be supposed to have been altered; because, when corrected by an unitarian, nothing is wanting to the evident purpose of the

writer ; whereas his censures of the Gnostics are frequent and copious ; so that no person can pretend to leave them out, without materially injuring the epistles.

Besides, there are in these epistles of Ignatius, several things that are unfavourable to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. Thus to the Ephesians, he says, sect. v. " How much more
" must I think you happy who are so joined to
" him [the bishop] as the church is to Jesus
" Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father, that so
" all things may agree in the same unity." To the Magnesians, sect. vii. he says, " As therefore
" the Lord did nothing without the Father,
" being united to him, neither by himself nor
" yet by his apostles ; so neither do ye any thing
" without your bishop and presbyters."

What this excellent man said when he appeared before the Emperor Trajan, was the language of an unitarian. " You err," he said " in that you
" call the evil spirits of the heathens, gods. For
" there is but one God, who made heaven and
" earth, and the sea, and all that are in them ;
" and one Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son,
" whose kingdom may I enjoy." Wake, p. 131.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

*Of the sentiments of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and
Clemens Alexandrinus, concerning Herefy.*

REV. SIR,

IF after what I have seen in your *Charge*, and in these *Letters*, I could be surprized at any thing you say on these subjects, it would be at your so confidently maintaining, p. 79. that Justin Martyr had a view to the unitarians in those accounts of *heresy in general*, which I quoted from him; when any person, with a small portion of that reading of which you pretend to so much, must know that every word and phrase in those accounts, especially the charge of *pride, atheism*, and *blasphemy*, is appropriated to the Gnostics, and the Gnostics only. I must take the liberty to say, that you know nothing at all of the ancient ecclesiastical writers, if you can imagine that the unitarians are ever described by them in this manner. I am even ashamed to argue with any man who, if he has read the early fathers at all, has read them to so little purpose.

To me it is indisputably clear, that Justin Martyr considered no other class of persons as heretics, unfit to have communion with christians, but the Gnostics only. Let any reasonable man but compare these passages in which he

censures the Gnostics with so much severity, with those in which he speaks of the unitarians (in which I still am of opinion he makes an apology to them for his own principles, but which certainly imply no censure) and I think he cannot but conclude with me, that unitarianism was considered in those times in a very different light from what it was afterwards, and is now.

Justin also particularly mentions his having no objection to hold communion with those Jewish christians who observed the law of Moses, provided they did not impose it upon others. Dial. p. 23*. Now who could those be, but Jewish unitarians? for, agreeable to the evidence of all antiquity, all the Jewish christians were such.

It is truly remarkable, and may not have been observed, by you, as indeed it was not by myself till very lately, that Irenæus, who has written

* This circumstance may throw some light on the passage in Jerom, in which he speaks of the Ebionites as anathematized solely on account of their adherence to the Jewish law. The Ebionites, at least many of them, would have imposed the yoke of the Jewish law upon the Gentile christians, they would not communicate with those who were not circumcised, and of course these could not communicate with them; so they were necessarily in a state of excommunication with respect to each other. This would also be the case with the Cerinthians as well as the Ebionites, and therefore Jerom mentions them together, the separation of communion, with respect to both arising from the observance of the law of Moses; though Jerom might write unguardedly, as he often did, in confounding the case of the Cerinthians so much as he here does with that of the Ebionites.

so

so large a work on the subject of heresy, after the time of Justin, and in a country where it is probable there were fewer unitarians, again and again characterizes them in such a manner, as makes it evident, that even *he* did not consider any other persons as being properly heretics besides the Gnostics. He expresses a great dislike of the Ebionites; but though *he* appears to have known none of them besides those who denied the miraculous conception, he never calls them *heretics*. I had thought that in one passage he had included them in that appellation; but observing that in his introduction, and other places, in which he speaks of *heretics in general*, he evidently meant the Gnostics only, and could not carry his views any farther, I was led to reconsider that particular passage, and I found that I had been mistaken in my construction of it.

“All heretics,” he says, “being untaught and ignorant of the dispensations of God, and especially of that which relates to man, as being blind with respect to the truth, oppose their own salvation; some introducing another father besides the maker of the world, others saying that the world and the matter of it was made by angels,” &c. and after mentioning other similar opinions, he adds, “others not knowing the dispensation of the virgin, say that he (Jesus) was begotten by Joseph. Some say that neither the soul nor the body can receive eternal life, but the internal man only*,” i. e. that they denied the resurrection.

* *Indocti omnes heretici, et ignorantes dispositiones Dei, et inscii ejus quæ est secundum hominem dispensationis, quippe cæcutientes*

Now as Cerinthus, and Carpocrates, and other Gnostics, denied the miraculous conception, as well as the Ebionites, and all the rest of this description, both before and after this circumstance, evidently belongs to the Gnostics only, and as in no other place whatever does he comprehend them in his definition of *heresy*, it is natural to conclude that he had no view to them even here, but only to those Gnostics, who, in common with them, denied the miraculous conception. If there be any other passage in Irenæus in which he calls, or seems to call, the Ebionites *heretics*, I have overlooked it. The Ebionites were Jews, and had no communion with the Gentiles, at least that appears; and Irenæus says nothing at all of the unitarians among the Gentiles, who generally believed the miraculous conception, though, as appears from other evidence, they constituted the great mass of the unlearned christians.

Clemens Alexandrinus makes frequent mention of heretics, and expresses as much abhorrence of them as Justin Martyr does; but it is evident, that in all the places in which he speaks of them, his idea of heresy was confined to Gnosticism. He con-

cæcutientes circa veritatem, ipsi suæ contradicunt salutem. Alii quidem alterum introducentes præter demiurgum patrem. Alii autem ab angelis quibusdam dicentes factum esse mundum, et substantiam ejus, &c. Alii autem rursus ignorantes Virginis dispensationem, ex Joseph dicunt eum generatum. Et quidam quidem neque animam suam neque corpus recipere posse dicunt æternam vitam, sed tantum hominem interiorem. Lib. V. cap. xix. p. 429.

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siders it as an answer to *all heretics* to prove that "there is one God, the almighty Lord, who was "preached by the law and the prophets, and also "in the blessed gospel*." He also speaks of heresy as "borrowed from a barbarous philosophy;" and says of heretics, that "though they say there is one "God, and sing hymns to Christ, it was not accord- "ing to truth; for that they introduced another God, "and such a Christ as the prophets had not foretold." Strom. Lib. VI. p. 675. See also p. 542. 662. He likewise speaks of heretics in general, as having a high opinion of their own knowledge, *οἰσιν γνώσεως εἰληφόρων*. Strom. Lib. VII. p. 754. He calls them *δοξιστοί*, *men who think that they have found the truth*, p. 755. and *ὕπὸ δόξοσοφίας ἐπηρμενοί*, *elated with a conceit of their knowledge*, p. 759. He says that "heresy began in the time of Adrian," when it is well known that Basilides, and the most distinguished of the Gnostics made their appearance. Strom Lib. VII. p. 764. He says the heretics went by different names, as those of Valentinus, Marcion, and Basilides, mentioning none but Gnostics, p. 765. It may only be conjectured that he meant the Ebionites by the *Peralici*, enumerated by him among those who had their denomination from the place of their residence. But this is the only passage in which the word occurs. He never includes the Gentile unitarians among heretics, and even your great authority, Mosheim, allows (what

* Καὶ ἀπασαὶ ἐντενθεὶ τὰς αἵρεσεις ἐν αὐτῷ δεικνύουσι θεὸν καὶ κυρίον παντοκράτορα, τὸν διὰ νόμου καὶ προφητῶν, πρὸς δὲ καὶ μακάριον εὐαγγέλιον γνησίως κεκηρυγμένον. Strom. Lib. VI. p. 475.

indeed

indeed he could not deny) that the unitarians lived in communion with the catholic church in the early ages.

As the strict Ebionites held no communion with the Gentile christians, it is very possible that Clemens Alexandrinus might insert them in a catalogue of heretics, and allude to them under the name of *Peratici*, without intending any censure of their doctrine with respect to Christ. Besides, this was a name given them, as he says, from their place of residence, and therefore did not include the unitarians among the Gentiles.

It is clear to me from the attention that I have lately given to this subject, that even long after the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was established by councils, and the decrees of emperors, the common people were well known to believe nothing of the matter; and yet, if they made no disturbance, and did not think proper to separate from the communion of the orthodox themselves, they were not excommunicated. This may be inferred from the passage which I quoted from Athanasius; but of which you have taken no notice, from which it appears that the unitarians were the *οἱ πολλοί*, *the many*. In the time of Tertullian they were the *major pars credentium*, *the greater part of believers*; and in the time of Origen they were the *το πλῆθος*, *the multitude*, and the *τα πλῆθη* *the multitudes*.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R VII.

Of the state of Heresy in the time of Tertullian.

REV. SIR,

NOTHING can well be more evident than that Tertullian represents the great body of unlearned christians in his time as unitarians, and even holding the doctrine of the trinity in great abhorrence. It is hardly possible, in any form of words, to describe this state of things more clearly than he does. Indeed, with respect to this you are pleased to make some concession, though by no means such as the case requires.

“ I must confess, Sir,” you say, p. 74. “ here
 “ seems to be a complaint against the unlearned
 “ christians, as in general unfavourable to the tri-
 “ nitarian doctrine ;” but you add, “ the com-
 “ plaint is of your own raising. Tertullian will
 “ vouch but for a small part of it. *Simple per-
 “ sons, says Tertullian (not to call them ignorant
 “ and ideots) who always make the majority of be-
 “ lievers, because the rule of faith itself carries us
 “ away from the many gods of the heathens, to the
 “ one true God ; not understanding that one God is
 “ indeed to be believed, but with an OECONOMY (or
 “ arrangement) startle at the æconomy. They take
 “ it for granted that the number and disposition of
 “ the trinity is a division of the unity. They pretend*
 “ that

“ that two, and even three are preached by us, and
 “ imagine that they themselves are the worshippers of
 “ one God. We, they say, hold the monarchy. La-
 “ tins have caught up the word *MONARCHIA*, Greeks
 “ will not understand *OECONOMIA*. Let our au-
 “ thor’s words be thus exactly rendered, and you
 “ will find in them neither complaint, nor ac-
 “ knowledgment, of a general prevalence of
 “ the unitarian doctrine among christians of any
 “ rank. Tertullian alleges, that what credit it
 “ obtained was only with the illiterate, nor with
 “ all the illiterate, but only those who were igno-
 “ rant, and stupid in the extreme. To preclude
 “ the plea of numbers, he remarks, that the illite-
 “ rate will always make the majority of believers.
 “ *Some simple people*, he says, take alarm at the
 “ notion of a plurality of persons in the unity of
 “ the godhead.”

Here, Sir, I complain of two gross misrepresen-
 tations of your author, the first respects the
number of these simple people, and the second the
 degree of their simplicity, or as you call it *stupidity*.
 Whoever Tertullian meant by the *simplices*
 and the *idiotæ*, for any thing that appears, he
 meant the whole body of them. His language
 is general, and unlimited, and therefore you are
 altogether unwarranted in your limitation of it
 to *some of them*. I really wonder at your assurance
 in this. I am far from construing Tertullian
 rigorously, and am ready to allow that *some* of
 these *simplices* and *idiotæ* might profess to believe
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the doctrine of the trinity, though he says nothing of it; but making all reasonable deductions on this account, he asserts a palpable falsehood, and against himself, if a very great majority of these *simplices* and *idiotæ* were not unitarians. On the whole, it is impossible not to infer from this passage, that, in the time of Tertullian, the great body of unlearned christians were unitarians, and that they were so in part from their construction of the *regula fidei*, or *the creed*, to which they gave their assent at baptism. They even regarded the doctrine of the trinity with horror, as nothing less than idolatry, enjoining the worship of more gods than one. Common sense can put no other construction on this passage, and Tertullian is far from being singular in this acknowledgment. It is made in different modes by several of the fathers, even later than the age of Tertullian.

In the next place, I complain of the *degree* of simplicity, or, as you call it, stupidity with which you charge these unitarians. Tertullian calls them *idiotæ*, which you render *ideots*, and this you have the assurance to call an *exact translation*. You say, p. 91. that I consult only the *ordinary lexicons*. Pray, Sir, in what lexicon or dictionary, ordinary or extraordinary, did you find this sense of the term *idiotæ*, in Latin, or *ιδωτῆς* in Greek? Can you produce any passage in an ancient writer in which the word has that meaning? I will venture to say that it properly signifies *an unlearned man*,

man, or a person who has not had a learned or liberal education. But such persons may have as good sense as those who have had that advantage, and may judge as truly concerning the great principles of religion as the most learned. The doctrine of one God, or two Gods, requires no knowledge of the learned languages, and you, Sir, perhaps would have understood christianity no worse, if you had never heard of the *Parmenides*.

It is most natural to interpret the language of any writer by the use of it in other writers of the same age, character, and profession. Now the translator of Irenæus certainly uses the word *idiot* (*ἰδιώτης*, no doubt, in the original Greek) for *an unlearned man*, without the least reference to any weakness of understanding. Speaking of the heretics, who boasted of their knowledge, he says, lib. V. cap. xx. “Non contemplantes quanto
 “ pluris sit *idiot* religiosus a blasphemus et im-
 “ pudens sophista: Not considering how much
 “ better is a religious and unlearned man, than a
 “ blasphemous and impious sophist.” Certainly you would not render it *a religious idiot*, for idiots are incapable of religion. From the *blasphemy* here ascribed to heretics, who were Gnostics, you may also take a hint for the right understanding of the quotation from Justin.

Theodoret, in his explanation of 1 Cor. xiv. 16. says, that “ by *ἰδιώτης* was meant *a layman*, be-
 “ cause it is the custom to call those *ἰδιώταις* who
 “ were

“ were not engaged in war ;” meaning, perhaps, “ those who had no public employments.” Opera, vol. III. p. 191.

Our translators of the New Testament had a very different idea from yours of the meaning of the word *ἰδιώτης*. For in Acts iv. 13. we read that when Peter and John were examined before the High Priest, and his kindred, “ they wondered at “ their boldness, because they perceived them to “ be *ἰδιώται* ;” but it is not rendered *ideots*, which would have been absurd enough, but *unlearned and ignorant men*. In 1 Cor. xiv. the word occurs three times, and is always translated *unlearned* ; and in 2 Cor. xi. 6. Paul calls himself *ἰδιώτης*, and he could not be supposed to have called himself *an ideot*. It is there rendered *rude*.

One of your proofs, p. 83. that unitarianism was proscribed in the primitive church in the time of Tertullian, is his saying that the *regula fidei* in his treatise *de Præscriptione* was the belief of all christians. But every writer, if we wish not to cavil, but to understand his real meaning, must be interpreted in a manner consistent with himself. It is a degree of candour that is due to all writers ; and what you strongly plead for in the case of Eusebius. Now, concerning what we now call *the apostles creed*, Tertullian expresses himself in such a manner (in his treatise *de Virginibus Velandis*) as gives us clearly to understand that this was all that was necessary to the faith of a christian.

tian. This creed might be subscribed by any unitarian who believed the miraculous conception. The other creed, therefore, which is not the apostles, must be his own comment or exposition of the proper *regula fidei*, or creed (and indeed it has all the appearance of a comment, as may be seen by the comparison) and all that we can conclude from it, is that it contains his own opinion, which is well known from his writings in general.

To prove that the *regula fidei* in the treatise *de Præscriptione* was the belief of all christians in that age, you must prove that it was the creed that all christians gave their assent to ; and this assent was only given at the time of baptism. But that *regula fidei* (which supposes the pre-existence of Christ) is no where to be found but in this particular passage in the writings of Tertullian ; whereas that which is called *the apostles creed* is, with some variations, frequently mentioned, and is known to have been the only creed that was used at baptism in the time of Tertullian, and long afterwards.

That Tertullian alluded to none but the Gnostics in the *regula fidei* of his treatise *de Præscriptione* is evident from every clause in it, and from the object of the work, which respects the Gnostics only, the unitarians being only occasionally and slightly mentioned in it. Though, therefore, a single feature in this account is found in
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the unitarians, as well as in the Gnostics, it is the *whole character* that we are to attend to, and not that feature in particular.

In all other places in which I have found Tertullian to speak of *heresy in general*, it is most evident that his ideas went no farther than to the opinions of the Gnostics, except that he once calls Hebion a heretic, and then he expressly makes his heresy to consist in his observance of the Jewish ritual*.

“ Heresies,” he says, “ do not differ from “ idolatry, having the same author, and the same “ work with idolaters ; for that they make another God against the creator ; or, if they acknowledge one creator, they discourse of him “ in a manner different from the truth †. Heretics,” he says, “ deny that God is to be “ feared ‡”, which agrees with his saying that “ the heathen philosophers were the patriarchs “ of heresy §,” for they held that doctrine ; but it was very remote from any thing that is ever laid to the charge of the unitarians.

* Ad Galatas scribens invehitur in observatores et defensores circumcisionis et legis. Hebionis hæresis est. De Præf. f. xxxiii. p. 214.

† Neque ab idolatria distare hæreses, cum et auctoris et operis ejusdem sint cujus et idolatria. Deum aut fingunt alium adversus creatorem, aut si unicum creatorem constituentur, aliter eum differunt quam in vero. De Præscriptione, f. xl. Opera p. 217.

‡ Negant deum timendum. De Præf. f. xliii. p. 218.

§ Hæreticorum patriarchæ philosophi. Ad. Herm. f. viii. p. 236.

“ Heretics,” he says, “ associated with the magi,
 “ with fortune-tellers, with astrologers, with phi-
 “ losophers; being actuated by a principle of
 “ curiosity; so that the quality of their faith may
 “ be judged of from their manner of life; for
 “ discipline is the index of doctrine*.”

The whole of this account is inconsistent with Tertullian's considering unitarians as heretics, but much more is his saying, that “ the Valentinians
 “ were the most numerous of all the heretics†,” and that “ the heretics had nothing to do with their
 “ discipline. Their want of communion,” he says, “ shews that they are foreign to us‡.” For it is most evident that those whom he calls *simplices* and *idiotæ*, were ranked by him among the *credentes*, or *believers*. They were even the *major pars credentium*, though unitarians, and holding the doctrine of the trinity in abhorrence.

Let any person judge from the whole of this, if it must not have been inconsiderate, at least, in Ter-

* Notata etiam sunt commercia hæreticorum cum magis, quam pluribus, cum circulatoribus, cum astrologis, cum philosophis, curiositati scilicet deditis.—Adeo et de genere conversationis qualitas fidei æstimari potest: doctrinæ index disciplina est. De Præscriptione, f. xliiii. p. 218.

† Valentiniani frequentissimum plani collegium inter hæreticos. Ad. Valent. f. i. p. 250.

‡ Hæretici autem nullum habent consortium nostræ disciplinæ, quos extraneos utique testatur ipsa ademptio communicationis. De Baptismo, f. xv. p. 230.

tullian,

tullian, and inconsistent with himself, to call those persons heretics, who could not subscribe to that form of the creed which includes the article of pre-existence, and which was not assented to at baptism.

Tertullian also recites the articles of the creed in a third form, in his book against Praxeas. But as in the former he evidently had a view to the Gnostics only, so in this, he had a view to the opinions of Praxeas, whom he was refuting. This, therefore, as well as the other, though delivered in the form of a creed, and said to be held by all christians, can only be considered as his own comment upon it, and as containing his own opinion. It is as follows :

“ We believe in one God, but under that dispensation which we call the *æconomy* ; so that there is also a son of this one God, his word, who proceeded from him, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made that was made ; that he was sent by the Father into a virgin, and of her born man and God, the son of man, and the son of God, and called Jesus Christ ; that he suffered, died, and was buried, according to the scriptures ; that he was raised by the Father, and taken up into heaven ; that he sits at the right-hand of the Father, and will come to judge the living and the dead ; who thence, according to his promise, sent from the Father the holy spirit, the comforter, and the sanctifier of the faith of
F 3 “ those

“ those who believe in the father, the son, and the
“ holy spirit*.”

Let the impartial reader then judge, whether we are not more likely to find the genuine proper creed, which was considered as containing the *faith of all christians*, unmixed with any peculiar opinions of Tertullian's own, in the treatise *de Virginibus Velandis*, in which he is not opposing *orthodoxy* to *beterodoxy*, but simply *faith* to *practice*.

I am really surprized that you should lay so much stress on the testimony of Tertullian, admitting it to be clear and uniform, which it is far from being, and also on that of Eusebius, with respect to the general faith of christians even in their own times, and much more in times preceding them; when it is so common for men to represent the opinions of those whom they esteem as the same with their own. Every man should be heard with caution when he

* Unicum quidem deum credimus, sub hac tamen dispensatione quam œconomiam dicimus, ut unicus dei sit et filius sermo ipsius, qui ex ipso processerit, per quem omnia facta sunt, et sine quo factum est nihil; hunc missum a patre in virginem, et ex ea natum hominem et deum, filium hominis et filium dei, et cognominatum Jesum Christum. Hunc passum, hunc mortuum, et sepultum, secundum scripturas, et resuscitatum a patre, et in cœlos resumptum, sedere ad dextram patris, venturum judicare vivos et mortuos, qui exinde miserit, secundum promissionem suam, a patre spiritum sanctum, paracletum, sanctificatorem fidei eorum qui credunt in patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum. Hanc regulam ab initio evangelii decurrisse, &c. Ad. Praxeam, s. ii. p. 501.

praises

praises himself; and what he says in one place should be compared with what he says in another, and especially what he drops, as it were, accidentally, and when he was off his guard. As I said before, "their evidence in these cases is not to be regarded, unless they bring some sufficient proof of their assertions."

Had Tertullian, Origen, and others, thought more highly of the *common people* than they did, we should probably never have known from them what their opinions were. But happily for us, they thought meanly of them, and, without being aware of the use and value of the information, have given us sufficient lights into this very important circumstance in the history of their times. But in this, as well as in several other respects, you, Sir, have been led into several mistakes through your ignorance of human nature; the knowledge of which, and a due attention to it, would have been of much more service to you in these enquiries, than your knowledge of Greek, in which, however, I do not perceive that you greatly abound. This ignorance of human nature appears in your insisting, p. 174. that if I admit the evidence of Eusebius for the existence of the Ebionites in the time of the apostles, I must admit his testimony to their condemnation of them.

As Theodotus who appeared in the time of Tertullian is called a heretic in the appendix to Tertullian's book *De Præscriptione*; I think it probable that, after his excommunication, he formed

a church of pure unitarians, and might be the first who set up a separate place of worship on that account, and therefore was denominated an *heretic* in the original sense of that word; and this circumstance might give rise to the opinion that he was the first who taught the doctrine.

When Eusebius wrote so as evidently to suppose that the Ebionites existed in the time of the apostles, you say, p. 173, "I consider it as an hasty assertion of a writer over zealous to overwhelm his adversary by authorities." I suspect that he may have been guilty of something like this, when he said that Theodotus was excommunicated by Victor on account of his unitarian principles. That he was excommunicated I admit, but that his unitarian principles was the sole ground of his excommunication, I have some doubt, considering your own idea of the credit of the witness, which indeed is pretty much the same as my own.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R VIII.

Of Origen's idea of Heresy.

REV. SIR,

WHAT I have said concerning Clemens Alexandrinus and Tertullian, is true also of Origen, and these writers may help to explain each other. No man took more pains to inculcate the doctrine of the *logos* than Origen, and he thought meanly of those christians who did not adopt it, considering them as of an inferior rank ; but I believe he never classes them with *heretics* ; and whenever he speaks of *heretics in general*, he, as well as all preceding writers, evidently had a view to the Gnostics only. See his *Commentary on Matt.* vol. I. p. 156, 159, 212, 287, 475, and many other passages in his writings.

In his treatise entitled *Philosophumena*, which is the first of his books against the heretics, it is evident that he considered none in that light besides the Gnostics, see p. 6. 8. and 16. of that work, as published by Wolfius, at Hamburg, in 1706.

In one place he evidently considers the unitarians and heretics separately, as two distinct classes of men ; but supposes that the unitarians confounded the persons of the father and the son, on which account they were called *Patripassians*. But notwithstanding

withstanding the evil that he says of them, he acknowledges that they adhered to their opinion as thinking that it did honour to Christ, as on other occasions he ascribes it to their regard to the one true God the Father. "We are not," says he, "to consider those as taking the part of Christ who think falsely concerning him, out of an idea of doing him honour. Such are those who confound the intellect of the Father and the Son, distinguishing their substance in idea and name only; and also the *heretics*, who, out of a desire of speaking magnificently concerning him, carry their blasphemy very high, even to the maker of the world, are not on his side*."

It is evident to me that in the time of Origen, viz. the beginning of the third century, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was so far from being generally received, except by the bishops and the more learned of the clergy, that it was considered as a sublime doctrine, proper indeed for persons who had made advances in divine knowledge, but not adapted to the vulgar, who were content with the plain doctrine of Jesus Christ and him crucified,

* Οὐ νομίσεν γὰρ εἶναι ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τὰς τὰ ψευδὴ φρονησάσας περὶ αὐτοῦ φαντασίας, τὰ δοξάζειν αὐτόν, οἱποιοὶ εἰσὶν συγκατέλις πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ ἐννοοῦν, καὶ τὴν ὑποστάσιν ἐνὰ διδόντες εἶναι τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν, τὴν ἐπὶ οὐαμοῖν, καὶ τοῖς ἐνδοῦσι, διακρινέας τὸ ἐν ὑποκείμενον. καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν αἰρέσεων, φαντασία τὴν μεγάλην περὶ αὐτοῦ φρονεῖν, ἀδικίαν εἰς τὸ ὑψοῦν αὐτόν, καὶ κακῶς λογιέσθαι τὸν δημιουργόν, καὶ εἶναι ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ. Comment. in Matt. vol. I. p. 471.

looking

looking no farther than to his humanity, as it is delivered in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John's doctrine of the *logos* was thought to be too sublime for the generality of Christians.

“ No one,” says Origen, “ taught the divinity
“ of Christ so clearly as John, who presents him
“ to us, saying, I am the light of the world,
“ I am the way, the truth, and the life; I am the
“ resurrection; I am the gate; I am the good
“ shepherd; and in the Revelation, I am the *α'ρβα*
“ and *omega*, the beginning and the end, the first
“ and the last. We may therefore boldly say,
“ that as the gospels are the first fruits (or most
“ excellent part) of the scriptures, so the gospel
“ of John is the first fruits of the gospels; the
“ sense of which no person can conceive except
“ he who reclines on the breast of Jesus, and who
“ can receive from Jesus his mother Mary, and
“ make her his own. He must be another John
“ who was shewn by Jesus as another Jesus. For,
“ he who is perfect does not himself live, but
“ Christ lives in him; and since Christ lives in
“ him, he says to Mary concerning him, behold
“ thy son, Christ himself*.”

“ This,”

* Οὐδείς γὰρ ἐκείνων ἀπερίως ἐπαγέρωσε· αὐτὴν τὴν θεοῦ ἰδὼς
ὡς Ἰωάννης, παρὰ τὴν αὐτὸν λέγοντα, ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου,
ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ οὁδός, καὶ ἡ ἀληθεία, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ. ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις.
ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ θύρα, ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός. καὶ
ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει, ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ α καὶ τὸ ω, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος,
ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος. τοιμήσουσιν τοῖσιν εἰπεῖν ἀπαρχὴν
μὲν

"This," says he, "we ought to understand, that as the law was a shadow of good things to come, so is the gospel as it is understood by the generality. But that which John calls the *everlasting gospel*, and which may be more properly called the *spiritual*, instructs the intelligent very clearly concerning the Son of God. Wherefore the gospel must be taught both corporeally and spiritually; and when it is necessary we must preach the corporeal gospel, saying to the carnal that we know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. But when persons are found confirmed in the spirit, bringing forth fruits in it, and in love with heavenly wisdom, we must impart to them the *logos* returning from his bodily state, in that he was in the beginning with God*."

"There,

μεν πασων γραφων ειναι τα ευαγγελια, των δε ευαγγελιων απαρχην το καλὸν Ιωαννην, ὃ τον νυν κεις δυναται λαβειν μη ανατισαν επι το σηθὺ Ιησοῦ, μηδε λαβεῖν απο Ιησοῦ την Μαρριαν γενομένην καὶ αὐτὴν μήτερα; καὶ τηλικυτον δε γεγενῆσθαι διὰ τὸν εσομειον αλλον Ιωαννην, ὡς τε οιοει τον Ιωαννην δειχθηναι οὐκ Ιησοῦν απο Ιησοῦ—καὶ γαρ πας ο τελειωμενὸς ζῇ εκετι, ἀλλ ἐν αὐτῷ ζῇ Χριστος, καὶ επει ζῇ ἐν αὐτῷ Χριστῷ, λεγεται περὶ αὐτῆς τῆς Μαρριαν, ἰδὲ ο υἱὸς σε ο' Χριστῷ. Comment in Johan. vol. II. p. 5.

* Καὶ τὸ δε εἰδῆναι εχρησ, οτι ὡς περ εἰς νομὸν σκιας παριχων των μελλοντων αγαθων, υπο τε καλ' ἀληθειαν κατ'αγγελιομενε νομῳ δηλουμετων; εἶπω καὶ ευαγγελιον σκιας μυηριαν Χριστοῦ διδασκει, το νομιζομενον υπο παντων των ερτογγεμενων νομιθαι. Ο δε φησιν Ιωαννης ευαγγελιον αἰωνιον, εἰκνιωτι ατ' λαχθῆσομενος πνευματικος, σαφως παριστησι τοις
 ρουσι

“ There are,” says he, “ who partake of the
 “ logos which was from the beginning, the logos
 “ that was with God, and the logos that was
 “ God, as Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and any
 “ others that speak of him as the logos of God,
 “ and the logos that was with him ; but there
 “ are others who know nothing but Jesus Christ
 “ and him crucified, the logos that was made
 “ flesh ; thinking they have every thing of the
 “ logos when they acknowledge Christ accord-
 “ ing to the flesh. Such is the multitude of those
 “ who are called christians*.”

“ Again, he says, “ the multitudes (i. e. the
 “ great mass or body) of believers are instructed
 “ in the shadow of the logos, and not in the

νοοσι τὰ πάντα ἐνώπιον περιυιῶ τε θεῶ. — Διοτί παραγκαλὼν
 πνευματικῶς καὶ σωματικῶς Χριστιανίζειν καὶ οὐ μὲν ἔχει τὸ
 σωματικὸν κηρύσσειν εὐαγγέλιον, φασκόντα μηδὲν εἶδέναι τοῖς
 σαρκικοῖς ἢ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τὸν ἐσαυρωμένον, τὸ τοιοῦτον.
 ἔτι δὲ εὐρεῖσθαι κατηρτισμένοι τῷ πνεύματι, καὶ καρποφορεῖτες
 ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐρωτῆς τὴν κρίσιν σοφίας, μεταδοτέον αὐτοῖς τὴν λόγον,
 ἐπαγγέλλοντο ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκώδους, ἐφ' ἣν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν
 θεόν. Comment. in Johan. vol. II. p. 9.

* Οὕτω τοίνυν οἱ μὲν τινες μετεχούσιν αὐτῆς τῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ λόγου
 καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν λόγου, καὶ θεὸς λόγος, ὥσπερ ὡς καὶ ἡσυχίας καὶ
 ἡρεμίας, καὶ εἰ τις ἕτερος τοιαύτον αὐτὸν παρέστην ὡς τὸν λόγον
 κτίει, ἢ τὸν λόγον γενέσθαι πρὸς αὐτὸν. ἕτερος δὲ οἱ μηδὲν
 εἰδότες εἰμὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τὸν ἐσαυρωμένον, τὸν γενομένον
 σὰρκα λόγον, τὸ πᾶν νομίζοντες εἶναι τὴν λόγον Χριστὸν κατὰ
 σὰρκα μόνον γινώσκουσι. τὸ τοιοῦτον δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πεπιστευ-
 κέναι νομιζομένων. Comment. in Johan. vol. II. p. 49.

“ true

“true logos of God, which is in the open
“heaven*.”

These humble christians of Origen who got no farther than the shadow of the logos, and the *simplices* and *idiotæ* of Tertullian, were probably the *simplices credentium* of Jerom, who, as well as the heretics, he says, “did not understand the “scriptures as became their majesty.” For had these simple christians, within the pale of the church, inferred from what John says of the logos, and from what Christ says of himself, that he was, personally considered, equal to the father, Jerom would hardly have said that they did not understand the scriptures according to their majesty: for he himself would not pretend to a perfect knowledge of the mystery of the trinity. “For “these simple christians, he says, “the earth of “the people of God brought forth *hay*, as for “the heretics it brought forth *thorns*†.” For the intelligent, I suppose, it produced richer fruits.

From all these passages, and others quoted before, especially the *major pars credentium* of Ter-

* Τα δε πληθη των πεπιστευκεναι νομιζομενων τη σκια τε λογου, καὶ υγι τω αληθινω λογω θεου εν τω ανιωγοτι κρατω τω γυανοντι, μαθητευεται. Comment. in Johan. vol. II. p. 52.

† Quod dicitur *super terram populi mei spinæ et fœnum ascendent*, referri potest et ad hæreticos, et ad simplices quosque credentium, qui non ita scripturam intelligunt ut illius convenit maiestati. Unde singula singulis coaptavimus, ut terra populi dei hæreticis spinas, imperitis quibusque ecclesiæ fœnum afferat. In 1f. xxxii. 20. Opera, vol. IV. p. 118.

tullian, I cannot help inferring, that the doctrine of Christ being any thing more than a man, who was crucified and rose from the dead (the whole doctrine of the incarnation of the eternal logos, that was in God, and that was God) was considered as a more abstruse and refined doctrine, with which there was no occasion to trouble the common people; and it is evident that this class of christians was much staggered by it, and offended when they did hear of it. This could never have been the case if it had been supposed to be the doctrine of the apostles, and to have been delivered by them as the most essential article of christian faith, in which light it is now represented. Such terms as *scandalizare*, *expavescere*, &c. used by Tertullian, and *τερασθεν* by Origen, can only apply to the case of some *novel* and *alarming* doctrine, something that men had not been accustomed to. In the language of Origen, it had been the *corporeal gospel* only, and not this *spiritual* and *mysterious* one that they had been taught.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R I X.

Of the light in which the Unitarians were considered in later ages, and of the state of the common people at all times.

REV. SIR,

IT appears from what has been advanced in the preceding letters, that, whatever might be the opinion of the more learned christians, and of course that of the *writers*, the bulk of the common people were not brought to a belief, or rather a profession, of the doctrine of the trinity till a pretty late period; and that if they did not of themselves leave the communion of the orthodox, and raised no disturbance in the church, they were connived at. In fact, they were considered by the more learned as simple ignorant people, who knew no better, and who acquiesced in the doctrine of the simple *humanity* of Christ, because they were incapable of comprehending that of his *divinity*, and the sublime doctrine of *three persons in one God*. This must have been the case with the *οἱ πολλοί*, *the many*, or multitude, of Athanasius.

This writer, considering the violence of his character, speaks of the unitarians with a good deal of tenderness on account of the difficulty of understanding

standing the doctrine of the trinity. In my former letters, I quoted a passage from him, in which he represents them as the *οἱ πολλοί*, *the many*, and persons of a low understanding, but by no means as persons out of the church. Contrasting them with the Gnostics and the Arians, he says, "some persons considering what is human in Christ, seeing him thirsting, labouring and suffering, and degrading him to a mere man, sin indeed greatly; but they may readily obtain forgiveness, if they repent, alledging the weakness of the flesh; and they have the apostle himself administering pardon to them, and as it were holding out his hand to them, while he says, Truly, *great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh* *."

According to him many persons within the pale of the church must either have been unitarians, or have believed the doctrine of the trinity without understanding it, which in fact is no belief at all. Being consulted what was to be done with respect to the spread of the doctrine of *Paulus Samosatensis*; after acknowledging that persons of *low understandings* were chiefly infected with it, and quoting what

* Όταν τινες, εἰς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἐλέποντες, ἰδῶσι τὸν κυρίον διψῶντα, ἢ κοπιῶντα, ἢ παχυνόντα, καὶ μόνον φλυαρησῶσιν ὡς καὶ ἄνθρωπος τε σωτήρ, ἀμαρτάνουσι μὲν μέγας. δύναται δὲ ὁμοῦ ταχέως μεταγινώσκοντες λαμβάνειν συγγνώμην, ἔχοντες προφασιν τὴν τε σωματικὴν ἀδυναμίαν· ἔχουσι γὰρ καὶ ἀποστόλον συγγνώμην αὐτοῖς νέμοντα, καὶ οἷοι χειρὰ αὐτοῖς ἐν τῷ λέγειν ἐκτείνοντα, ὅτι καὶ ὁμολογούμενος μέγας ἐστὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον, ὅτι ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί. In illud Evangelii Quicumque dixerit, &c. Opera, vol. I. p. 975.

G

Paul

Paul says of the *great mystery of godliness*, *God manifest in the flesh*, he says, "those who understand the subject *accurately* are few, but all pious persons may hold the faith delivered to them*." But what kind of *holding* must it be, when they had no perfect understanding of what they held.

Gregory Nazianzen also represents the common people as excuseable for their errors, and safe from not being disposed to scrutinize into things†.

I have also observed many instances in writers so late as Chrysostom, who notwithstanding the prevalence of a different mode of treating unitarians, use the term *heretics* in its ancient and proper sense, for the Gnostics only. Here I shall content myself with one from Athanasius. He says, "The heretics make to themselves another maker of the universe, besides the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ‡." Indeed Athanasius considered the proper unitarians in a more favourable light than he did either the Gnostics, or the Arians. See Opera, vol. I. p. 975. 977, 978.

* ΟΤΙ ΤΗΝ ΜΕΝ ΑΚΡΙΒΕΙΑΝ ΑΥΤΗΣ ΕΠΙΖΗΤΕΙΝ ΟΛΙΓΩΝ ΕΣΙ, ΤΗΝ ΔΕ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ ΚΑΤΕΧΕΙΝ ΑΠΑΝΤΑΝ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΝ ΕΥΤΕΙΔΕΑΝ. De Incarnatione contra P. Samosat. Opera, vol. I. p. 592.

† Τοις μὲν γὰρ τελευτάχα ἀν' ἡ συγγινώσκουμεν τὰς παρὰ τὴν ἐκείνου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τὸν ἀβασανισμὸν. Oratio xxi. Opera, vol. . p. 388.

‡ Οἱ δὲ ἀπο τῶν αἱρετικῶν ἄλλων ἐαυτοῖς ἀναπλαττόντες ἡμισυγον τῶν πατρῶν παρὰ τὸν πατέρα τε κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. De Incarnatione. Opera, vol. I. p. 55.

Cyrit

Cyril of Jerusalem complains of heretics, both unitarians and Arians, in the bosom of the church. "Now," says he, "there is an apostasy; for men have departed from the faith, some confounding the Son with the Father, others daring to say that Christ was created out of nothing. Formerly heretics were open, but now the church is full of concealed heretics*." The more zealous of the orthodox bishops might do something more than complain, but in general it may be presumed that they did not trouble themselves about the matter.

Complaints of the spread of heresy, both that of the unitarians, and that of the Arians, in Asia Minor, in the time of Basil, by himself, and his contemporaries, are without end. Those opinions prevailed more especially among the *common people*, though many of the clergy were also infected; and what is remarkable, the malcontents complained loudly of his *innovations*, both with respect to ancient doctrines, and ancient practices. For some time Basil, called *the great*, was obliged to give way to the storm, and retire from his diocese, though this, it seems, was a dangerous step; for, according to him, unremitted vigilance

* Νῦν δὲ ἐστὶν ἀποστασία: ἀπεστητάν γὰρ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τῆς ὁρθῆς πίστεως, καὶ οἱ μὲν υἱοπατορεῖν καταγγέλλουσιν, οἱ δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἐξ ἑκ ὧντων εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρὲν ἐχθρὸν λέγειν τολμῶσιν, καὶ πρότερον μὲν ἦσαν φανεροὶ αἱρετικοί, νῦν δὲ πεπληρωταὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία κεκρυμμένων αἱρετικῶν. Cyrilli. Catech. xv. p. 209.
See also p. 5.

was necessary to guard their flocks from seduction. "If any person," he says, "leave his diocese for the shortest time, he leaves the common people exposed *."

I think we may learn from Facundus, who wrote so late as the reign of Justinian, that in his time many of the common people were well known to consider Christ as a *mere man*, and yet were not disturbed on that account. As the passage in his writings from which I infer this is a pretty remarkable one, I shall cite it at full length. Speaking of the condemnation of Theodorus, in whose favour he is writing, he says, that "in condemning him they condemned all those who thought as he did, even though they afterwards changed their opinion. — What will they do with Martha, and then with Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, who were particularly attached to our Lord while he was upon earth? And yet both of them, first Martha, and then Mary, are said to speak to him thus, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*; who, though they thought that he was the Son of God who was to come into the world, yet would they not have said *if thou hadst been here*, if they had believed him to be God omnipresent. They therefore only thought as Theo-

* *Εἰ γὰρ τις ἢ πρὸς τὸ βραχυτάτον τῆς ἐκκλησίας αὐτῆς ἀποσταλὴν ἐκδιώκων ἀφιστῇ τὰς λαοὺς τοῖς ἐπιστρέφουσιν.* Basilii
 Epist. lxx. Opera, vol. III. p. 114.

"dorus

“dorus is said to have done, and were excommu-
 “nicated along with him; and how many of this
 “kind do we know, by the writings of the apos-
 “tles and evangelists, there were at that time,
 “and how many even now are there still in the
 “common herd of the faithful, who by only par-
 “taking in the holy mysteries, and by a simple
 “observance of the commandments, we see pleas-
 “ing God; when even the apostles themselves,
 “the first teachers, only thought as those whom
 “we see to be included in this condemnation of
 “Theodorus*.”

The case is indeed the same, in a greater or less degree, at all times, and in all churches. Quiet people will generally be indulged in their own way of thinking, and they are only those that disturb others that are themselves disturbed.

* *Condemnaverunt omnes ab ipso in quem illum incidisse putant errore conversos. — Ubi quid agent de Martha et Maria, sororibus Lazari, qua familiari devotione ipsi domino dum hic in carne degerit adhæserunt. Et tamen utraque, id est, prius Martha, ac deinde Maria, legitur illi dixisse, Domine si fuisses hic frater meus non fuisset mortuus. Quæ licet crederent quod ipse esset filius Dei qui in mundum venisset, tamen non dicerent si fuisses hic, si eum cognoscerent sicut Deum, ubique esse presentem. Eadem ergo sapuerunt quæ dicitur sapuisse Theodorus, et cum Theodoro simul anathematizati sunt. Et quantos vel eo tempore in evangelis et apostolicis scriptis tales fuisse cognovimus? Quantos etiam nunc tales in grege fidelium, sola sanctorum mysteriorum participatione, et simplici præceptorum obedientia, placentes Deo vidimus; cum et ipsi primi pastores ejus Apostoli sic aliquando sapuerunt, quos omnes cum Theodoro vidimus in hoc anathemate condemnatos. Pro defensione trium Capitulorum, Lib. X. c. vii. p. 162.*

Is it not well known that there are both Arians and Socinians members of the church of England, and even among the clergy themselves; and yet if they can reconcile it to their own minds to keep in communion with a trinitarian church, there are no attempts made to molest them. Zealous as the *heads* of the church are (from the archdeacons to the archbishops) for the purity of its tenets, they think proper to connive at these things, and so they did in an age more zealous than this. The excellent Mr. Firmin was not only an avowed Socinian, and in communion with the church of England, but in habits of intimacy with Tillotson, and some of the most distinguished churchmen of his time.

At present there are Arian and Socinian writers within the pale of your church, and yet I dare say it never occurred to any archdeacon, bishop, or archbishop, that it would be proper to excommunicate any of them for the part they have acted. Such a thing as this might not have passed so easily in the time of Theodosius; but even then I make no doubt but that persons who could content themselves without disturbing others, would not have been molested.

You and I are both agreed that persons who do not *bona fide* hold the acknowledged tenets of any church (I mean such great and distinguished ones as those relating to *the object of worship*) ought to withdraw themselves from it, and not, by continuing in communion with it,
to

to countenance its errors. But how many are there who do not see the thing in the same light, or whose habits and prejudices are such, that they cannot bring themselves to act as we think every principle of *honour*, as well as of *religion* dictates; and yet I cannot agree with you, if you should say that all such persons are hypocrites, and insincere, doing what they themselves know and feel to be wrong. They have excuses which I doubt not satisfy their own minds, though they do not satisfy me. Great allowance, no doubt, is also to be made for the force of habit, and even for a natural timidity. There are many Erasmus's for one Luther, many Dr. Clarkes for one Whiston, a name which, notwithstanding the weakness of his judgment in some things, ought never to be mentioned without respect, on account of his almost singular and unparalleled uprightness.

As to the *common people*, the *idiots* of Tertulian, we generally see that, as they are not innovators in doctrine, they go to public worship where they have been used to do, without any nice discrimination of what is transacted there; and the observation will generally apply to the bulk of the inferior clergy. When Henry VIII. reformed the church of England, how many joined him in it, who would never have declared themselves dissenters from the established church? The church is now trinitarian; but supposing that an Arian or Socinian parliament

(which is a possible case in this inquisitive and fickle age) should change the established religion in that respect, how many do you think of the clergy (excepting those who possess the rank, the knowledge, and the zeal of Archdeacons, &c. and also those whom you would place in the *dregs of methodism*, p. 62.) would become dissenters; especially if, as was often the case in former times, they had no alternative but a prison with a good conscience, or their present emoluments without one. I rather think they would contrive to keep both, and soon make themselves perfectly easy in their new situation.

With respect to the *common people* in general, settled as you may think them to be in the doctrines of the church of England, perpetually hearing of *three persons and one God*, and daily making their responses to *the holy blessed and glorious trinity*; yet could they, without any preparation, or discussion, hear Mr. Lindsey's reformed liturgy read to them by their usual ministers, and no Archdeacon should sound the alarm, but they were to take it for granted that all was done by order of their *superiors*, and therefore *right*, I dare say the peace of few parishes would be much disturbed by it.

These considerations, which are founded on such a knowledge of human nature as we may learn from all history, and our own daily observation, may render it credible, that the majority
of

of the common people, the *idiote* of Tertullian, though not the *ideots* of Dr. Horsley, might be unitarians, and yet continue in communion with the church after its forms became trinitarian, especially as they would not become so all at once. In the most ancient liturgies, you know, there were no prayers addressed to Christ; and as the members of christian societies were not required to subscribe to any thing*, there was nothing that they were expected to *bear a part in*, concerning which they might not be able to satisfy themselves.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X.

Of the Quotation from Athanasius.

REV. SIR.

IT is with very little effect, indeed, that you cavil at my quotation from Athanasius, and the defence I made of it. To every impartial reader it discovers how extremely averse the Jews were to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ; and, to borrow a word from

* In the times in which the doctrine of the trinity was most agitated, some of the more zealous bishops proposed the *Nicene creed*, and other tests, to those who were in communion with them; but even then this practice does not appear to have been general.

you

you and Mr. Badcock, to what *management* the apostles were reduced in divulging this offensive doctrine to them. I have nothing to offer in addition to what I said on that subject, except that I have no objection to your rendering *εὐλογίᾳ καὶ αἰτίᾳ*, a *good reason*, instead of a *plausible pretence*; for I doubt not that it appeared a very good reason to Athanasius, who had nothing better to suggest.

Athanasius, however, by no means stands single in his view of the prejudices of the Jews, and of the conduct of the apostles with respect to them. Epiphanius, as quoted above, shews how prevalent the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ was at the time that John wrote. There are also passages in several of the Fathers, and especially a great number in Chrysostom, by which we clearly perceive that their ideas of the conduct of the apostles was precisely the same with that which I have ascribed to Athanasius; and as it is possible that by a different kind of instinct, my *rapid glances* may have discovered more passages of this kind than have occurred to you, in the actual *reading* and *study* of all the authors, I shall here produce one of them from the preface to his Commentaries on the Book of Acts.

After treating pretty largely of the conduct of the apostles with respect to their insisting on the doctrine of the *resurrection* of Christ, rather than ~~that of his~~ *divinity*, immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit, he says, "As to the Jews, who had
 " daily

“daily heard, and been taught out of the law, *Hear*
“O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord, and besides
“him there is no other; having seen him (Jesus)
 “nailed to a cross, yea having killed and buried
 “him themselves, and not having seen him risen
 “again, if they had heard that this person was God,
 “equal to the Father, would not they have re-
 “jected and spurned at it.” I want words in Eng-
 lish to express the force of the Greek, in this place.
 The Latin translator renders it *nonne maxime omnes*
ab his verbis abhorruissent, ac resiliissent, et oblatras-
sunt. “On this account,” he adds “they (the
 “apostles) brought them forwards gently, and by
 “slow degrees, and used great art in condescending
 “to their weakness*.”

In how different a light do Crystostom and you represent the same thing. According to you, the Jews were always fully persuaded that their Messiah was to be God, equal to the Father; and therefore, after the apostles had persuaded them that Jesus was the Messiah, they had nothing to apprehend from their attachment to the doctrine of the

* Πως δε αν Ιουδαιοι οι καθ' εκαστην ημεραν, μανθανοντες υπο τω νομο, Ακου Ισραηλ, κυριος ο Θεος το κυριον εις εστιν, η πλην αυτου εκ εστιν αλλοις, επι Ξυλα σταυρου ιδοντες προσηλωμενον αυτον, πολλοι δε η σταυρωσαντες η θαψαντες, η υδε αναστασια διασταμινον, ακυοντες οτι Θεος εστιν αυτος υιου. η τω πατρι ισοι, εκ αν μαλιστα πατριων απετηθησαν η απεραγηνσαν. Διατι τοιο προμα, η κατω μικρον, αυτους προσβιβιζοσι, η πολλη μεν ηχονηται τη της συγκαταθεσεως οικονομια. In Acta Hom. i. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 447.

unity

unity of God, and had no occasion for any *art* or *management* with respect to it. However, their view of things, I doubt not, assisted Athanasius, Chrysostom, and others, who lived nearer to those times, than the present Archdeacon of St. Albans, to account for the great number of unitarians among the early Jewish christians. Nor could they wonder at the same among the Gentiles, considering, as Athanasius does, that they could only learn christianity from the Jews; and it would have answered no end for the apostles to have spoken with caution to the Jews, and with openness to the Gentiles. Besides, according to Chrysostom, the Gentiles were not much better prepared to receive the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, than the Jews themselves.

In the same passage, part of which I have quoted above, after observing that, if the apostles had not conducted themselves in this cautious manner with respect to the Jews, their whole doctrine would have appeared incredible to them, he adds, “and at Athens
 “ Paul calls him (Jesus) simply a *man*, and nothing
 “ farther, and for a good reason. For if, when
 “ they had heard Christ himself speaking of his equality to the Father, they would on that account have
 “ often stoned him, and called him a blasphemer;
 “ they would hardly, therefore, have received this
 “ doctrine from fishermen, especially after speaking
 “ of him as crucified. And why do I speak of the
 “ Jews, when at that time, even the disciples
 “ of Christ himself were often disturbed, and scandalized at him, when they heard sublime doc-
 “ trines;

“ trines ; on which account he said, I have many
 “ things to say to you, but ye are not yet able to
 “ bear them. And if they could not bear these
 “ things who had lived so long with him, and had
 “ received so many mysteries, and seen so many
 “ miracles, how could men from their altars, and
 “ idols, and sacrifices, and cats, and crocodiles ;
 “ for such was the worship of the heathens ! But
 “ being first brought off from these abominations,
 “ they would readily receive their discourse con-
 “ cerning more sublime doctrines*.”

But we find no trace of either Jews or Gentiles
 having received these sublime doctrines that Chry-
 sostom alludes to in the age of the apostles. Nay
 he himself represents the apostle Paul as obliged to
 use the same caution with respect to the Jews, when
 he wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was so
 late as A. D. 62, about two years before his death.

* Εν δὲ Ἀθηναῖς καὶ ἀνδρῶν αὐτοῦ ἀπλῶς καλεῖ οὐ Παιλῶν,
 καὶ δὲ πλέονειπών. εἰκότως. εἰ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν Χριστὸν διαλεγό-
 μενον περὶ τῆς εἰς τὸν πατεραισιότητος, λιθασαὶ πολλακίς ἐπι-
 χειρήσαν, καὶ βλασφημίον δια τὸ ἐκάλει, ὅλην γὰρ πᾶσαν τῶν
 αἰσίων τῶν λόγων ἐδέξαντο, καὶ τὸ τὸν σαυρὸν προχρη-
 σάντες. Καὶ τί δὲ λέγειν τὴς Ἰουδαίας ; ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ τότε
 πολλακίς οἱ μαθήται τῶν υφίλοτερον ἀκούοντες ἐθροῦνεντο καὶ
 ἐσκάνδαλιζόντο. δια τὸ καὶ ἐλέγε πολλαχῶς λέγειν ὑμῖν
 ἀλλ' οὐ δύνασθε βασάζειν αὐτῶν. εἰ δὲ ἐκεῖνοι οὐκ ἐδέξαντο οἱ
 συγγενόμενοι χρόνον τοσούτον, καὶ τοσούτων κοιροῦσαντες ἀπορ-
 ρητῶν, καὶ τοσαῦτα θεασάμενοι θαύματα, πῶς ἀνδρῶν οὐκ
 ὄντων, καὶ εἰδῶν, καὶ θυσιῶν, καὶ αἰερῶν, καὶ κροκοδείλων,
 τοιαῦτα γὰρ ἦν τῶν ἐλλήνων σεβασμάτων ; καὶ τῶν ἀλλῶν τῶν
 κακῶν τότε πρῶτον ἀποσπαδέντες, ἀθροῦν τὴς υφίλης τῶν
 δογμάτων ἐδέξαντο λόγους. Ibid.

And if the body of the Jewish christians were at that time unitarians, can it be thought probable that they became trinitarians soon afterwards? If the apostles themselves had not succeeded in this business, which required equal address and authority, who else can be supposed to have done it?

Chrysostom represents the apostle as beginning his epistle to the Hebrews with saying, that “it was *God* who spake by the prophets, and by his son, and not that *Christ* himself had spoken by them, because their minds were weak, and they were not able to bear the doctrine concerning *Christ**.” He even says that “when he there speaks of *Christ* as above the angels, he still spoke of his humanity.” See,” says he, “his great *caution*, *ορα την συνεσιν την πολλην*, *ib.* p. 1755, the very expression used by Athanasius on a similar occasion, and which you think I have not rendered rightly, and have mistaken the sense of the passage,

* *Και θεα τις συνεσις αυτο ειρηκες. ε γαρ ειπεν ο θεος ελαλησεν και τοις αυτου ην ο λαλησας. αλλ' επειδη αδυναμις αυτων ησαν αι ψυχαι, και εδιδου ακυειν ηδυνατον τα περι του Χριστου, φησιν ο θεος δι αυτου ελαλησεν.* In Heb. cap. i. Opera, vol. X. p. 1756. i. e. “See how prudently he spoke: for he said *God* spake though it was himself that spake; but because their minds were weak and they were not able to bear the things concerning *Christ*, he says *God* spake by *him*.” N. B. The (ε) in the second clause of this passage must be inserted by mistake for (και) or some other particle, as it contradicts what is said in the close of the sentence, and the obvious sense of the whole.

though

though Beaufobre, the popish translator, and I shall now add Dr. Lardner, all understood it as I do.

It was the general opinion of the Fathers, as may be learned from Epiphanius and Jerom, quoted above, that it was John who first preached the doctrine of the divinity of Christ explicitly, and that when Matthew, Mark, and Luke, wrote their gospels, the christians in general, but more especially the Jews among them, were not prepared to receive a doctrine of such sublimity.

Chrysostom represents all the preceding writers of the New Testament as “children, who heard, “but did not understand things, and who were “busy about cheese-cakes and childish sports* ; “but John, he says, taught what the angels themselves did not know before he declared it † ;” and he represents them as his most attentive auditors. Opera, vol. viii. p. 2. “Leaving the “Father,” he says, p. 11, “he [John] discoursed “concerning the son ; because the Father was “known to all, if not as a Father, yet as God, “but the unbegotten was unknown ‡.”

Observing

* Οἱ γὰρ ἅλλοι ἀπάντες, καθάπερ τὰ παῖδια τὰ μικρὰ, ἀκίεσι μὲν, ἐκίστασι δὲ ἀπερακύνειν, ἀλλὰ περὶ πλακύντας ἐπληροῦναι, καὶ ἀδυσμαῖα παιδικὰ. In Johan. i. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 2.

† Ἀμὴν δὲ ἀγγέλοι πρὶν ἢ τὰς ὁρὰς γενέσθαι ἠδείσαν. μεθ’ ἡμῶν γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἔσοι δια τῆς Ἰωάννου φωνῆς καὶ δι’ ἡμῶν ἐμαυτὸν ἀπεργάζομεν. In Johan. i. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 2.

‡ Τι δὴ ποτ’ ἐν τῷ παλαιοῦ ἀρεῖς, περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ διαλεγέσθαι : οἱ ἐκείνη μὲν δηλοῦν ἀπάσιν ἦν, εἰ καὶ καὶ ὡς παῖς ἦν, ἀλλ’ ὡς θεός.

Observing that *in the beginning was the logos*, he says, "This was not preached immediately, "for the world could not bear it. The evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John" (this last is inserted by some mistake) "when they began the preaching, spake at a distance, and "not immediately what became his dignity, but "what was convenient for their hearers *."

Of the three first evangelists, he says, that "they all treated of the fleshly dispensation, and "silently, by his miracles, indicated his dignity. "The dignity of the logos of God was hid, the "arrows against the heretics were concealed, and "the fortification to defend the right faith was "not raised by the pious preaching. John, therefore, the son of thunder, being the last, advanced to the doctrine of the logos," or the divinity of Christ †.

Austin

Θεῶ, ο δε μοτογενης ηγροειλο. In Johan. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 11.

* Εν αρχη ο λογος. Ουκ ευθως τοσο εκηρυχθη. η γαρ εχωρε ο κοσμος. Μακραν ημιν οι ευαγγελισται Ματθαιος Μαρκος, Λυκος, η Ιωαννης, ος ηξαιλο τε κερυγματις εκ ευθως ελαλησαν τα πρεποντα τη αξια, αλλα τα αρμοζοντα ταις σκρωμαιοις. De Sigillis. Opera, vol. VI. p. 171.

† Παλις ην εχωρησαν εις την της σαρκος οικονομιας, η ηριμα πως, δια των θαυματων, εγνωριζον την αξιας. Εκρυπτετο δε επι τα θεα λογις αξιωμα. Εκρυπτετο δε τα κατω των πνευματικων βελη, η το της ορθης δοξης επιτειχισμα υδωτο το κερυγματι της ευσεβειας εγνωστο. Ιωαννης τοστις ο υιος της αρετης, τελευταιος, περιελθων επι των θεολογων. Ib. p. 173. N. B. The sense of the passage absolutely

Austin writes to the same purpose, "And if
"there be any other things which, to those who
"rightly understand them, intimate the divinity
"of Christ, in which he is equal to the Father,
"John almost alone has given them in his
"gospel*."

Theodoret observes, that in the genealogy of Christ
given by Matthew, this writer did not add *according
to the flesh*, "because the men of that time would
"not bear it," evidently meaning, that they would
thereby have been led into a suspicion that, in the
idea of the writer, he had some higher origin, and
would have been offended at it; but the apostle
Paul, he says, could not avoid that expression in his
Epistle to the Romans. He adds, that "before
"his death, not only to the other Jews, but to the
"apostles themselves, he did not appear as a God,
"nor did his miracles lead them to form that opi-
"nion of him†." This writer also says that the

absolutely requires *εκρυπτετο* and not *εκηρυχτετο* in both
the clauses, and in the latter it is so rendered by the Latin
translator, though not in the former. The observation, that
the first verses in the gospel of John are a refutation of all
heresies is common with the Fathers. No person, except
one who is pretty well conversant with them, can imagine
how often those verses occur in their writings.

* Et si qua alia sunt, quæ Christi divinitatem, in qua æqualis
est patri, recte intelligentibus intiment, pene solus Joannes in
evangelio suo posuit. Austin de Consensu Evangelistarum,
Opera, vol. iv. p. 374.

† Προ μὲν το σῶντος καὶ το παθόντος, ὁ δεσποτῆς Χριστοῦ καὶ μόνον
τις ἄλλοις Ἰουδαίοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοῖς ἀποστόλοις οὐκ εἰσὶν εἰναι

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δε

apostle Paul, in mentioning the subjection of Christ to the Father, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, "spake of him more lowly than was necessary, on account of their weakness." 1 Cor. xv. Opera, vol. III. p. 201.

And yet you, Sir, who have, no doubt read, considered, and re-considered, all these passages, and many more than I can produce to the same purpose, can say, p. 93. "The desire of instructing the Jews, not the fear of offending them, was the motive with the apostles for propounding first what was the easiest to be understood, and the most likely to be admitted;" and even add, you cannot read without astonishment, that I should suppose that Athanasius meant to intimate that they were afraid of giving offence to the Jews.

When we consider how late the three first gospels were written, the last of them not long before that of John, which was near, if not after the destruction of Jerusalem, and that, in the opinion of these writers above mentioned, all this caution and reserve had been necessary on the part of the christian teachers, how is it possible, that, in their idea, the christian church in general should have been well established in the belief of our Lord's divinity? It could only have been great and open zeal on the part of the apostles, and not the *caution* and *management* which these writers ascribe to them, that could have effectually

Dele. — *Idem* in *Scriptores eccles.* opus sancti Basilii
de *dele.* in Rom. Lib. iv. Opera, vol. III. p. 12.



taught a doctrine, which, according to them, they were ill prepared to receive. And the history of both Peter and Paul sufficiently prove, that the influence of mere apostolical authority was not so great at that time as many persons now take it to have been. Whatever powers they had, they were not considered as *lords over the faith of christians*.

The christians of that age required something more than the private opinion of an apostle. They required some supernatural evidence that his doctrine was from God; and we have no account of the apostles proposing to them this article of faith, and alledging any such evidence for it. Chrysostom says, that "if the Jews were so much offended at having a new law superadded to their former, how much more would they have been offended if Christ had taught his own divinity." May it not be supposed, therefore, that they would have required as particular evidence of a divine revelation in the one case as in the other? And what remarkably strong evidence was necessary to convince them that the obligation of their law did not extend to the Gentiles? Would they, therefore, have received what Chrysostem considered as the more offensive doctrine of the two, without any pretence to a particular revelation on the subject?

It may be said that all the caution of which we have been speaking was necessary with respect to the *unbelieving Jews only*, into whose hands these gospels, and the other writings of the New Testa-

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ment,

ment might fall. But how impossible must it have been to conceal from the unbelieving Jews the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, if it had been a favourite article with the *believing Jews*? If this had been the case, it could not but have been known to all the world; and therefore all the offence that it could have given would have been unavoidable. So that this supposed caution of the evangelists, &c. would have come too late, and would have answered no purpose whatever.

This caution, therefore, must necessarily have respected those persons into whose hands the gospels, &c. were most likely to come, and who would give the most attention to them; and these were certainly the believing Jews, and the christian world at large, and not unbelievers of any nation. And we are authorized to conclude that, in the opinion of the writers who have spoke of it, of whatever weight that opinion may be, this caution in divulging the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was necessary with respect to the great body of christians themselves, and especially the Jewish christians. Consequently, they must have supposed that at the time of these publications, which was about A.D. 64, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was not generally held by christians, and that there would have been danger of giving them great offence if it had been plainly proposed to them by the apostles themselves. At this time, therefore, it may be inferred, that in the opinion of these writers, the christian church was principally unitarian, believing only the

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the simple humanity of Christ, and knowing nothing of his divinity or pre-existence.

From the acknowledgment which these orthodox fathers could not help virtually making (for certainly they would not do it unnecessarily any more than yourself) that there were great numbers of proper unitarians in the age of the apostles; it seems not unreasonable to conclude, that there were great numbers of them in the age immediately following, and in their own; and their knowledge of this might be an additional reason for the opinion that they appear to have formed of that prevalence in the apostolic age. Would those fathers have granted to their enemies spontaneously, and contrary to truth, that the Jews were strongly prepossessed against the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and that the unitarians were a formidable body of christians while the apostles were living, if it had been in their power to have denied the facts? The consequence of making these acknowledgments is but too obvious, and must have appeared so to them, as well as it now does to you, which makes you so unwilling to make it after them.

You say that the unitarian Jews mentioned by Athanasius were not christians, and that the Gentiles to whom they taught the doctrine of the humanity of the Messiah were mere heathen Greeks. "Have you forgotten, Sir," you say,

p. 97. "have you never known, or would you deny, what is not denied by candid infidels, that the expectation of a great deliverer, or benefactor of mankind, was universal even in the Gentile world, about the time of our Lord's appearance." This, however, I do very much question, and I should be glad to know the names of the candid infidels who have acknowledged it.

An expectation of a Messiah certainly existed among the Jews, and of course among their proselytes; but if any such idea had been universal among the Gentiles, so as to interest them in discussions about the nature of this great deliverer, as whether he was to be God or man, &c. we should certainly have perceived some traces of it in their writings. It might have been expected that, on account both of the interesting nature, and of the obscurity, of the subject, there would have been different opinions about it, that it would have been a common topic in their philosophical schools; and that their historians would have given some account of the origin and foundation of this universal opinion.

You will produce, I suppose, Virgil's sixth eclogue. But, Sir, can you believe that even Virgil himself really expected any such person as he describes? The use that the poets might make of a vague report of a prophecy, brought probably from the east, and ultimately from the

the Jewish scriptures. (but seriously believed by no person that we know of) merely to embellish a poem, is one thing; but the actual and universal expectation of such a person, is another.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XI.

Of the Time when Christ began to be considered as God, and the Opinion of the ancient and modern Jews with respect to the Messiah.

REV. SIR,

I Took the liberty to request that you would endeavour to fix the time when the apostles and primitive christians began to consider Christ as God, or even the maker of the world under God; taking it for granted, that at the first they supposed him to be a mere man. This I thought no person living would have denied. That the Jews expected only a man for their Messiah is clearly supposed by Justin Martyr, and all the christian fathers. The Jews of their time were perpetually objecting to the christian doctrine on account of their making Christ to be a God, and I have no doubt, but that the expectation of the

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Jews

Jews at this day is the same with that of their ancestors two thousand years ago.

You, Sir, have, however, ventured to deny all this. Speaking of the apostles, you say, p. 107. that "from their first acknowledgment of our Lord as the Messiah, they equally acknowledged his divinity. The Jews," you say, p. 109. "in Christ's days had notions of a trinity in the divine nature. They expected the second person, whom they called the Logos, to come as the Messiah *." For the proof of these assertions I refer you to the work of the learned Dr. Peter Allix, entitled *The Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church against the Unitarians*; a work which it is to be hoped, Sir, you will carefully look through before you send abroad your intended *View of the doctrine of the first ages concerning Christ*."

When my stock of amusement from the writings of bishop Bull is exhausted, which is by no

* On this subject the opinion of the Fathers is unanimous, and against Dr. Horsley. They say indeed that the doctrine of the trinity may be proved from the Old Testament, but that it was delivered so obscurely, on account of the proneness of the Jews to idolatry, that they did not understand it. Theodoret says, Επειδη γαρ Εβραϊοις εγραφε, οι μονον τιμα ειναι τον πατερα, αναγκαιον το δι αυτου προσεδειχαι. i. e. "The Jews had been accustomed to worship the Father only, and for that reason the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews was obliged to say, *By him let us offer sacrifices to God continually*." In. Heb. Opera, vol. III. p. 461.

means

means the case at present, I may perhaps throw away a few shillings on this Dr. Allix*. In the mean time, without entering into a large discussion on the subject, I shall only ask you a question or two relating to it, and you may answer me out of Dr. Allix if you please. Inform me then, if you can, how our Saviour could possibly, on your idea, have puzzled the Jewish doctors, as he did, reducing them to absolute silence, by asking them how David could call the Messiah his Lord, when he was his son, or descendant. For if they had themselves been fully persuaded, as you suppose, that the Messiah, though carnally descended from David, was in fact the maker and the God of David, and of them all, a very satisfactory answer was pretty obvious. Or without asking any other question of my own, what say you to Facundus, quoted above, who says that “Martha and Mary would never have said to Christ *if thou hadst been here*, had they thought him to be God omnipresent.” He adds, “neither would Philip have said to him *Shew us the Father*, if he had entertained any such idea of him.”

Facundus also says that the Jews always had expected, and in his time did expect, a mere man for their Messiah. “They did not know,” he says, “that Christ, the Son of God, was God,

* Some account of Dr. Allix’s opinion, and also of the confutation of it by Prideaux and Capellus, may be seen in *Mr. Lindsey’s Apology*, p. 88. Note.

“but

“ but they thought that Christ would be a mere
 “ man, which any one may perceive that the
 “ Jews at this time also think*.”

I am willing, however, to consider a few of the things which you have advanced, in order to give some degree of plausibility to this strange hypothesis. “ So far,” you say, p. 107. “ as they
 “ (the apostles) believed in Jesus as the Messiah,
 “ in the same degree they understood and ac-
 “ knowledged his divinity. The proof which I
 “ have to produce of this from holy writ consists
 “ of too many particulars to be distinctly enume-
 “ rated in the course of our present correspond-
 “ ence. I shall mention two, which to any but
 “ a decided unitarian will be very striking. Na-
 “ thaniel’s first profession, and Peter’s conster-
 “ nation at the miraculous draught of fishes. It
 “ was in Nathaniel’s very first interview with our
 “ Lord that he exclaimed *Rabbi, thou art the Son*
 “ *of God! thou art the king of Israel*; and this de-
 “ claration was drawn from Nathaniel by some
 “ particulars in our Lord’s discourse, which he
 “ seems to have interpreted as indications of om-
 “ niscience. When Simon Peter saw the num-
 “ ber of fishes taken at a single draught, when
 “ the net was cast at our Lord’s command, after
 “ a night of fruitless toil, he fell down at the

* Sed non propterea Christum dei filium, deum sciebant; hominem autem purum arbitrati sunt Christum.—Quod etiam nunc putantes Judæos quilibet videbit. Lib. IX. cap. iii. p. 139.

“ knees

“ knees of Jesus, saying, Depart from me, for I
 “ am a sinful man, O Lord. Peter’s consterna-
 “ tion was evidently of the same sort of which we
 “ read in the worthies of earlier ages, upon any
 “ extraordinary appearance of the light of the
 “ Sheclinah, which was founded on a notion that
 “ a sinful mortal might not see God and live.”

With respect to Nathaniel’s calling Jesus the
Son of God, this phrase was, in the mouth of a
 Jew, synonymous to the *Messiah*, or *Son of David*,
 and it is fully explained by the subsequent expres-
 sion of Nathaniel himself, viz. *King of Israel*, and
 therefore, the Jewish doctors, expecting nothing
 more in their Messiah than a glorious *King of*
Israel, such as David had been, could not give any
 satisfactory reason why David should call him *Lord*,
 having no notion of his spiritual kingdom, extend-
 ing to all mankind. If the mere appellation *Son*
of God, implies *equality with God*, Adam must have
 been a God, for he is called the Son of God, Luke
 iii. 38. Solomon also must have been God; and
 so must all christians, for they are called *Sons of God*.
 1 John iii. 2. John i. 12. Rom. viii. 14. Phil.
 ii. 15.

As you are so intimately acquainted with the Fa-
 thers, you must have known the construction that
 Chrysostom puts upon the language of Nathaniel;
 and as he was unquestionably orthodox, I should
 have thought that it might have had some weight
 with you. He says, that “ in this speech Nathaniel
 “ confessed

“ confessed Christ as a man, as appears by his address, *Thou art the King of Israel.*” In John, Opera, vol. VIII. p. 106.

As to what you call *omniscience*, you will hardly say it was a greater degree of knowledge than it is in the power of God to impart to a man. After our Saviour had performed what you, I suppose, will call an act of *omnipotence*, all the conclusion that the spectators drew from it was, that *God had given such power unto men.* Matt. ix. 8. They did not infer from it that he himself was God, or pretended to be God; and yet they probably thought that he was the Messiah.

As to the consternation of Peter, I should imagine that by the same mode of interpretation you might conclude that the widow of Zarephath took Elijah to be a God; for on the death of her son, she said, *1 Kings xvii. 18. What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God, art thou come to me to call my sins to remembrance, and to slay my son?* Pray, Sir, why might not the exclamation of Peter be considered as being of the same nature with that of this woman? The language is very similar, and I will not answer for it, but that you, not being a decided unitarian, may really be of opinion, that she took the prophet to be God incarnate.

Your proof of the doctrine of the trinity, from a verse in the first sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost, is particularly curious. It is as follows:

Acts

Acts ii. 33. *Jesus being by the right-hand of God, exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy ghost, has shed forth this, &c.* "I shall maintain," you say, p. 101. "that the three persons are distinctly mentioned, in a manner which implies the divinity of each." Well may you say, p. 102. that you shall "argue thus for the edification of your own flock, but with little hope of *my* conviction, from Peter's first sermon."

Indeed, Sir, I see nothing in this passage but as perfect a dependence of Christ upon God as any man can have. Why should Christ receive the Holy Spirit from the Father, according to a preceding promise, if he had been as much in the power of the Son as of the Father? And why must the Holy Spirit be so much at the absolute disposal of either of them, if he was God in his own right, and of course independent, as much as the Father himself?

The Father, you say, "is distinguished from the Son by not being called God in this place. Paternity is the property that distinguishes the person. But from whom is this first principle distinguished? From his creatures? From them he were more significantly distinguished by the name of *God*." But, Sir, to adopt your own language, have you forgot, or did you never learn, that we, who are mere mortal men, are taught to address God by the appellation of *Father*, as well as that Christ himself prayed to God by the same title? What weight then is there in the argument that you draw from

from this circumstance? Indeed, Sir, you must be happy in a very tractable flock, if such provision as this will satisfy them. You would make a sad exchange of your flock for mine. If such arguments do not of themselves expose a cause, I do not know what can do it. It is well for your cause that it has other supports besides *arguments*.

Considering the case of Stephen, which is your capital argument for the worship of Jesus Christ, you say, p. 102. "What could be the blasphemy against God" (with which he was charged) "what was there in the doctrine of the apostles which could be interpreted as blasphemy against God, except it was this, that they ascribed divinity to one who had suffered publicly as a malefactor?" You therefore say, "I shall always insist that the blessed Stephen died a martyr to the deity of Christ." As you have formed this resolution, it would be presumption in me to imagine that I could change it, and perhaps all your opinions are as fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Otherwise I might suggest that to a Jew, blasphemy against Moses, by whom God spake, would naturally be considered as blasphemy against the God by whom he spake; on the same principle as our Saviour says, Matt. x. 40. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.*

Besides, we are expressly told what was the *blasphemy* with which Stephen was charged, Acts vi.

11. viz. *against Moses and against God, against this holy place and the law*; and this is fully explained as follows, v. 14. *For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered us.* This was the whole of the accusation, very clearly stated, and where do you find any thing said concerning the *deity of Christ*.

I shall consider another of your curious arguments. You say, p. 101. "I shall particularly de-
 "fire them" (i. e. your gentle flock above men-
 "tioned) "to remark, that it is said of our Lord
 "Jesus, that it was not possible that he should be
 "holden of death. The expressions clearly im-
 "ply a *physical impossibility*." But as we read that
it is impossible for God to lie, it may be said that as
 God had foretold the resurrection of Christ, it
 was impossible but that it must take place. As
 to a proper *natural impossibility*, the fact is clearly
 against you; for if it had been naturally impos-
 sible for him to be *holden of death*, it must cer-
 tainly have been naturally impossible for him
 to have died at all; and if death could hold him
three days, it might for any thing which appears
in nature, have held him *for ever*, if the divine
 power, a power foreign to himself, had not in-
 terposed. Accordingly we read, not that he
 raised himself, but that *God raised him from the*
dead. Use, no doubt, will reconcile the minds
 of men to strange conceptions of things, and
 strange language; or I should wonder that you
 should

should not be shocked at the idea of *God's dying*. For when you speak of the natural impossibility of Christ's being holden of death, you must certainly have an idea of something more than the death of *his body*.

You, Sir, suppose that our Lord's disciples might have conversed with him as familiarly as they did, and have taken the liberties with him which they sometimes did (as when Peter rebuked him for complaining of being touched in a croud, &c. &c.) and yet have considered him as their God and maker. You say, p. 143. "the
 " most that could be inferred, were the assump-
 " tion true, would be something strange in their
 " conduct, and even this might be a hasty infer-
 " ence. The singularity of their conduct might
 " disappear if the accounts they had left of our
 " Lord's life on earth, and of their attendance
 " upon him, were more circumstantial. But the
 " truth is, that the foundations of this argument
 " are unsound." After mentioning instances in which you think they invoked him as a deity, you say, "If the angels Michael or Gabriel
 " should come and live among us in the manner
 " which you suppose, I think we should soon lose
 " our habitual recollection of their angelic na-
 " ture. It would be only occasionally awakened
 " by extraordinary incidents. This, at least,
 " would be the case if they mixed with us upon
 " an *even footing*, without assuming any badges of
 " distinction, wearing a common garb, partaking
 " of

“ of our lodging, and of our board, suffering in
 “ the same degree with ourselves from hunger
 “ and fatigue, and seeking the same refreshments.
 “ The wonder would be if angels, in this disguise,
 “ met with any other respect than that which dig-
 “ nity of character commands, and something of
 “ occasional homage when their miraculous help
 “ was needed. This was the respect which our
 “ Lord met with from his followers.”

To this, I can only say, that I am really
 astonished how you can entertain the idea of any
 number of persons living on this *even footing*,
 as you call it, with a being whom they actually
 believed to be the maker of themselves, and of
 all things, even the eternal God himself. Cer-
 tainly, Sir, you never attempted to realize the
 the idea, or even thought of putting yourself in
 their place, so as to have imagined yourself in-
 troduced into the actual presence of your maker,
 in the form of man, or any other form whatever.
 You must have been overwhelmed with the very
 thought of it; or if *you* should have had the
 courage, and unparalleled self possession, to bear
 such a thing, must there not have been numbers
 who would have been filled with consternation at
 the very idea, or the mere *suspicion*, of the per-
 son they were speaking to being really God.
 And yet we perceive no trace of any such con-
 sternation and alarm in the gospel history, no
 mark of astonishment in the disciples of our
 Lord in consequence of the belief of it, and no

I

marks

marks of indignation or exclamation of blasphemy, &c. against those who disbelieved it.

I am surprized to find how very differently you think from your *holy father* Athanasius on this subject. He says, "I will venture to say, that the blessed disciples themselves, had no perfect persuasion concerning his divinity, till the descent of the spirit at Pentecost*."

Chrysostom frequently observes that Christ only intimated his divinity obscurely, and left the full discovery of it to his apostles. Thus he says, that "he himself never said plainly that he made the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all things visible and invisible†. And why," says he, "do you wonder that others should have said greater things of him than he has said of himself, when he explained many things by actions, but never clearly in words. That he made *man*, he shewed clearly enough, as by the blind man; but when he was discoursing about the formation of the first man, he did not say *I made them*, but *he that made them*, made them, male and female. And that he made the world he signified by the

* Τολμῶ γὰρ λέγειν ὅτι ἔδε αὐτοὶ οἱ μακαριοὶ αὐτὸ μαθεῖται τοτέλειον περὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ θεότητος εἶχον φρονημα, εἰς το πνευμα το αγιον αὐτοῖς τῇ πεινακοση ἐπεφοίτησεν. De Communi Essentia. Opera, vol. I. p. 237.

† Ὅτι ἕρπον, καὶ γην, καὶ θαλασσαν, αὐτὸς ἐποίησε, καὶ τὰ ὑψώματα, καὶ τὰ ἀοράτα πάντα, αὐτὸς μὲν ἔδραμε σαφως εἰρηκεν. In Matt. v. Opera, vol. VII. p. 154.

"fishes,

“fishes, by the wine, by the loaves, &c.—but
“never clearly in words*.” He even says, “it was
“more necessary to be concealed from his disciples,
“because they would immediately have told every
“thing through an excess of joy †.”

“Christ,” he says, “did not reveal his divinity
“immediately; but was first thought to be a pro-
“phet, and the Christ; simply a man, and it after-
“wards appeared by his works, and his sayings;
“what he really was ‡.”

There is one important circumstance relating to
this subject, of which you have taken no notice at
all, which is this; If the apostles had really preached
the doctrine of the divinity of Christ from the first,

* Και τι θαυμάζεις εἰ ἑτέροι μείζονα περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκασιν
ων αὐτῷ εἰρηκεν. οὗτε γὰρ πολλὰ διὰ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπι-
δέκνυμεν διὰ τῶν ρημάτων σαφὲς ὅκ ἐλεγεν; ὅτι γὰρ τὸν
ἀνθρώπου αὐτοῦ ἐποίησεν εἰδείξει σαφὲς καὶ διὰ τῆ τυφλῶ. πρῶτα
δὲ περὶ τῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ πλάσεως ὁ λόγος ἦν αὐτῷ ἐκείπεν ὅτι ἐγὼ
ἐποίησα ἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτὸς. Πάλιν
ὅτι τὸν κόσμον ἐδημιούργησεν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τῶν ἰχθύων
διὰ τῶ οἶνε διὰ τῶν ἄρτων — ρήμασι ἑδῶκε τὸτο σαφὲς
εἶπεν. In Matt. v. Opera, Vol. VII. p. 154.

† Εἰδοὺ γὰρ τὴν λαοθάλασσαν, καὶ μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῶν μαθητῶν.
καὶ γὰρ ἐκ πολλῆς ἡδονῆς πάντα ἐκηρύτταν. In Matt. cap. viii.
Opera, vol. VII. p. 274.

‡ Οὐ γὰρ εὐθέως ἡμῖν αὐτὴ τὴν θεοτητα ἐξεκαλύπτεν,
ἀλλὰ πρῶτον μὲν ἐνομίζετο εἶναι προφήτης, καὶ χριστός, ἀπλῶς
ἀνθρώπος, ὑστέρῳ δὲ ἐφάνη, διὰ τῶν ἔργων καὶ τῶν ρημάτων,
τὸτο ὅτι ἦν. In Johan. Hom. ii. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 20.

and consequently it had always been the belief of the christian church, the unbelieving Jews must have heard of it. Would they not, therefore, have objected to it as loudly as they did in the times of the christian Fathers, and as they do at this day? How is it then, that neither in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in any of the epistles, we find the least trace of any such objection, the least notice of it, or the most distant reference to it, by those who were concerned to answer it. The most probable conclusion from this fact is, that no such offence had been given to the Jews, the apostles not having preached any such doctrine.

With respect to the time when our Saviour's disciples began to consider him as God, you say, p. 99. that I am the person most concerned to find the solution. I told you in my former letters, that I had solved the difficulty to my own perfect satisfaction in my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*; where I shewed by what steps the idea of the divinity of Christ was introduced. I did it upon my own hypothesis, of its not being an original doctrine, but a corruption of christianity; and I challenged you to give as probable an account of its introduction, on the idea of its being no corruption, but a genuine doctrine, revealed at some time or other by Christ to the apostles, and by the apostles to the body of christians. But according to you, it required no revelation at all. The whole Jewish nation were prepared

prepared to receive their Messiah as their God, and immediately to worship him accordingly.

I have no doubt, however, but that the Jews in our Saviour's time, expected a man in the character of the Messiah. Mary, his mother, evidently expected that he would even be born in the usual way, of two human parents; for when the angel informed her, that she should *conceive and bring forth a son*, who should be called the *son of the highest*, to whom *God would give the throne of his father David*, she replied, Luke i. 34. *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* The apostles evidently appear to me to have considered him as no other than a man, and they taught no other doctrine after our Saviour's death. We perceive no trace of it in the book of Acts; and Athanasius, Chrysostom, and others of the Fathers, only pretend that they taught it with *caution*, so as not to give much alarm, till John published it in his gospel.

Upon the whole, it appears, that the Jews who led the Gentiles into the belief of the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ were, according to Athanasius, christian Jews, and that their proselytes were christian Gentiles. It is perfectly ridiculous to suppose that the question could be interesting to any others. It also must have been the certain knowledge of great bodies of unitarians, Jews and Gentiles, in the earliest times, that led these Fathers to this hypothesis, to account

for the fact. But that the great body of Jewish christians should be unitarians in the time of the apostles without their having learned that doctrine from the apostles, is a thing that I cannot conceive. Moreover, it does not appear that the apostles took any umbrage at the prevailing doctrine, but connived at it; and all the indignation they expressed against *any* opinions, was against those of the Judaizing teachers and the Gnostics.

If the apostles did themselves really believe the doctrine of the trinity, they must, at least, have had no high idea of its *importance*, or they could never have been such tame spectators of the spread of the unitarian doctrine among their countrymen, and from them, according to Athanasius, among the Gentiles. How would Bishop Bull and the Archdeacon of St. Albans have written, if they had been in the situation in which Epiphanius and all the Fathers place the apostle John when he wrote his epistle? Would they have contented themselves with condemning the dangerous tenet of the unitarians in no more than one clause of a single sentence, which likewise contains the condemnation of the Gnostics? Would they not have thought the unitarian the more dangerous heresy of the two? and therefore have bent their chief force against it?

It is remarkable, however, and really curious, that before the unitarians were considered as heretics,

retics, we find a very different account of the reasons that induced John to write both his epistles and his gospel; Ignatius says it was solely with a view to the Gnostics, and so does Irenæus, again and again. This, therefore, was the more ancient opinion on the subject; and I doubt not, the true one. And it was not till long after this (Tertullian, I believe, is the first in whom it occurs) that it was imagined that the apostle had any view to the unitarians in any of his writings. This is a circumstance that well deserves to be attended to.

You imagine, Sir, what appears very extraordinary, indeed, to me, that the Jews will be easily reconciled to the doctrine of the trinity, and will even more readily embrace christianity on the trinitarian, than on the unitarian principle. “For
 “the Jews,” you say, p. 151. “whenever they
 “begin to open their eyes to the evidences of
 “our Saviour’s mission, they will still be apt to
 “consider the New Testament in connexion
 “with the Old. They will look for an agree-
 “ment in principle, at least, between the gospel
 “and the law. When they accept the christian
 “doctrine, it will be as a later and a fuller dis-
 “covery. They will reject it if they consider
 “it to be contradictory to the patriarchal and
 “Mosaic revelations. Successive discoveries of
 “divine truth may differ, they will say, in full-
 “ness and perspicuity, but in principle they must
 “harmonize, as parts of one system. They will

“ retain some veneration for their traditional
“ doctrines; and in their most ancient Targums,
“ as well as in allusions in their sacred books,
“ they will find the notion of one godhead in a
“ trinity of persons, and they will perceive that
“ it was in contradiction to the christians that the
“ later Rabins abandoned the notions of their
“ forefathers. The unitarian scheme of christia-
“ nity is the last, therefore, to which the Jews
“ are likely to be converted, as it is the most at
“ enmity with their ancient faith.”

So different, Sir, are your ideas and mine on this subject, that one would think we had never read the same authors, or lived in the same world. Our different views of things must have arisen from the different influences to which our minds have been exposed; but where you have been, or with whom you have lived, I cannot trace. Who those *later Rabins* were, who abandoned the notion of their fathers, and from expecting the Messiah to be God, adopted the idea of his being a mere man (a process which I should think not very natural) I cannot find. Late as they are, they must have been earlier than Justin Martyr; and indeed of this memorable *change of opinion*, on so fundamental a subject I find no trace whatever. Really, Sir, one cannot read such a shameful perversion and absolute *making* of ancient history, with respect to this doctrine concerning the Messiah, as well as to the church of Jerusalem, without a mixture of contempt and indignation.

I shall

I shall content myself, on this subject, with appealing to two testimonies. One of them is that of Basnage, and the other of later date.

Basnage, I suppose you will allow, had sufficiently studied the history and opinions of the Jews. He has written largely on the subject; and yet, though a trinitarian himself, he has exploded all the pretences of Cudworth and others to find the doctrine of the trinity either among the ancient or the modern Jews.

“ The christians, and the Jews,” he says, “ separate at the second step in religion. For after having adored together one God, absolutely perfect, they find the moment after the abyss of the trinity, which intirely separates them. The Jew considers *three persons* as *three Gods*, and this *tritbeism* shocks him. The christian, who believes the unity of one God, thinks that the father, the son, and the holy spirit, should all be called God, and have the same worship. It is impossible to reconcile opinions so contrary. There are, however, divines bold enough to attempt it*.” You, Sir, are one of those *bold divines*,

* “ Les chretiens s'ecartent des Juifs des le second pas qu'ils font dans la religion. Car apres avoir adore ensemble un dieu, souverainement parfait, ils trouvent un moment apres l'abime de la trinite, qui les separe, et les eloigne souverainement. Le Juif regarde trois personnes comme trois dieux, et ce tritheisme lui fait horreur. Le chretien, qui croit l'unite d'un Dieu, veut a meme tems q'on donne
“ ce

divines, or, if not bold yourself, at least a follower of the bold.

This writer also says that the “ Jews consider themselves as bearing their testimony to the unity of God among all the nations of the world†.” Deny these facts if you can. What *ought*, or what *ought not*, to offend the Jews, is not the question. The doctrine of the trinity does, in fact, and from the time that it was started always did, offend the whole body of the Jews, and is, no doubt, one of the greatest obstacles to their conversion.

My second testimony I shall give in the postscript of a letter from a correspondent in the West of England, in the year 1774, containing the opinion of a learned Jew, whom we may presume to be now living, and in this country. At that time, he must have been in the neighbourhood of Barnstable, in Devonshire. An event, which then gave me much concern, occasioned the discontinuance of my correspondence with the writer of that letter; and though desirous of knowing the issue of the business, I have not learned it. If this publication should be the means of bringing me acquainted with it, I shall think myself happy. If the learned Jew

“ ce titre au pere, au fils, au Saint Esprit, et q'on les adore,
 “ Il est impossible de concilier des opinions si contraires;
 “ cependant il y a des theologiens hardis, qui ont tenté de le
 “ faire.” Hist. des Juifs, Lib. IV. cap. iii. f. 1.

“ Les temoins de l'unité de Dieu dans toutes les nations
 “ du monde.” Ib. Lib. VII. cap. xxxiii. f. 15.

him-

himself should meet with these letters, I shall be very glad to hear from him, whatever may be his present thoughts on the subject. In the mean time, I would recommend it to you, Mr. Archdeacon, to enquire of any Jews now living, and not to argue from *suppositions*, when *facts* are within your reach.

My correspondent's postscript is as follows. "I have lent your *Institutes* to a sensible and religious Rabbi, bred at the university of Halle. He has read them with great care, and taken curious extracts from them. The clergyman of this parish warned him of the danger of your works, and abused me for lending them to a Jew. The latter had sense enough to despise him, and told him that as long as christianity was thought contradictory to the first law of Judaism, the conversion of his brethren would be impossible. The parson wanted to baptize him. The Rabbi said, religion was a serious matter, and he would be a convert in reality before he would be one in profession. He has been much with me. I hope to be able to send you a pleasing account of him."

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XII.

Of the Personification of the Logos.

REV. SIR,

YOU still deny that the christian Fathers were acquainted with any such thing as the *personification*, that is, *the making a real intelligent person* of the *logos*, or wisdom of God; whereas, absurd as I acknowledge the notion to be, it was, most indisputably the real doctrine both of Philo, the platonizing Jew, and of those who were called *orthodox christians*, who platonized likewise. I speak within compass, when I say that I can produce hundreds of passages which prove in the clearest manner, that the divinity which they ascribed to Christ was the very same *principle* which had constituted the *wisdom*, and other *powers*, of God the Father; and that the *generation of the Son* was the commencement of the state of *actual personality* of the *logos*, whether in time, as some thought, or from all eternity, as others, which latter was afterwards received as the established doctrine.

This was evidently agreeable to the principles of those platonists, from whom Philo and those christian Fathers derived their opinion, and if you deny this, *a child* as you call me in platonism, p. 15. (which however does not, I hope, prevent

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me

ne from being a man in christianity) I shall be able, as you will see in my larger work, to teach you what you are at present ignorant of with respect to it. If this kind of literature be your *home*, p. 163, I must say that you have been a considerable time *from home*, and that you are at present unacquainted with several apartments in your own house. I shall then wait upon you at this house of yours, and endeavour to point them out to you.

With respect to my quotation from Athenagoras, and my account of his meaning, you are pleased to say, p. 124, "it only finishes the proof, if it was before defective, of your incompetency in the subject. It shews that you are so little acquainted with platonism, that your mind cannot readily apprehend a platonic notion, when it is clearly set before you. What you take for my mere conjecture, viz. that *the external display of power*, is the thing that is called *generation*, is the express assertion of Athenagoras, in the very passage which you have quoted."

On the contrary, I maintain that, if your *external display of power* be any thing different from what I have called *the personification of the logos*, or his becoming a *proper person*, so as to be God, in himself considered, it is contradicted by Athenagoras in this very passage, as well as by all the christian writers who treat of the subject. In this passage

passage he calls the Son "the first production of "the Father, not that he was ever properly made," (that is, out of nothing) "for God being an "eternal mind, had *logos* always in himself, "being always *λογικόν*;" that is, being always a reasonable intelligent being. Now, Sir, what could any man mean by this expression, but that before this circumstance, or event (which I call the *personification* of the *logos*, and you the *external display of his powers*) took place, there was no more a proper trinity of persons in God, than there is in man; for God, like man, was then simply *λογικόν*, an intelligent being; wisdom, or intelligence, being one of his attributes. Many of the Fathers use this comparison, supposing the *logos* in God to have been originally exactly similar to *logos*, or reason in man. Now are there, think you, or was it ever imagined that there were, proper distinct persons in the mind of man, merely because that mind was *λογικόν* rational? The very expression excludes this idea, and must have been intended to exclude it.

But according to all the orthodox Fathers, after this generation of the Son (who before was nothing more with respect to the Father than *reason* is with respect to man) he assumed a proper *distinct personality*; and this generation was with a view to the production of material beings, and not the production itself, or the *display of powers* in that production. For this generation was represented as the proper *act of the eternal Father*, whereas the

the *display of powers* in the production of material beings (if I must adopt your quaint language) was according to them, the proper *act of the Son*. According to them it certainly was the Son, and not the Father, who was the immediate maker of all things. In my opinion Athenagoras's notion was, that this generation of the Son took place *in time*, and not from all eternity; because he says that from the beginning, or from eternity, God was simply *res*, a *mind*, having *logos* in himself, as being always λογικῶς, *reasonable*, or *intelligent*.

Athenagoras, however, as appears from this very passage, the beginning of which I quoted, was very far from having a notion of *three* distinct persons in the trinity. For though he thought, with Justin Martyr, that the *logos*, from the time of his generation, assumed a *permanent personality*, the holy spirit did not, but was like *a beam of the sun*, sometimes emitted from the Father, and sometimes drawn into him again, agreeably to the philosophy of those times concerning the sun and his light. This was also the kind of personal existence that Justin Martyr said that some persons in his time ascribed to the Son, and which was also said to have been the doctrine of Marcellus of Ancyra.

You say, p. 123, that "Tertullian, to prevent
 "the very conclusion which you draw from this
 "analogy, that the *logos* was at some time or
 "another a mere attribute, remarks that nothing
 "empty or unsubstantial can proceed from God.

"For

“For the divine nature admitting neither quality nor accident, every thing belonging to it must be substance.” This argument,” you add, “is ably stated in the Dialogues of the learned Dr. Leslie.”

This indeed, Sir, is an argument that requires both an *able stating*, and an *able defence*; for, in itself, nothing can be more weak. What, think you, could the Fathers mean by saying that, after the emission of the *logos*, the original divine mind was not destitute of *logos*? Did they not mean that he was not destitute of *reason*, or *understanding*? Is there not then necessarily implied an identity of nature between the *logos emitted*, and *logos retained*? Does it not follow from hence, and from its being said that the father was still λογικῶς, *rational*, that they were both originally what we call *reason*? Nay, do not some of the Fathers compare the emission of the *logos* from God to the emission of reason from man, in discoursing with one another?

You say, for it is *you* that say this (I have met with nothing so very absurd in Tertullian) that “the divine nature admitting neither quality nor accident, every thing belonging to it must be substance.” The divine being then has no *properties*, no *attributes*, no *perfections* at all, which is, in fact, denying his very *being*; for what is *being* without *properties*? Pray, Sir, has the Son or the Holy Spirit, any attributes? In all my reading I do not remember to have met with
any

any absurdity equal to this, except your own peculiar conceit, that "one mind can beget another by the contemplation of its perfections" (now called *substances*) a notion which you ascribe to *all the Fathers*, though I will venture to say it is not to be found in any of them. Strange enough, to be sure, are some of their conceits, but not quite so strange and absurd as this. There is, as you somewhere justly observe, a progress in *absurdity*, as well as in *truth*.

Lactantius, you acknowledge, expresses himself clearly enough according to my idea of this subject, but you dispose of his *orthodoxy*, as you did of Origen's *veracity*. You boldly deny it. This, indeed, is a very compendious method of answering me. But, Sir, the question is not whom you are *now* pleased to call orthodox, but who was deemed to be so in the age in which he lived. Now I challenge you to prove that any writer of the age of Lactantius considered him as heterodox. Indeed it was very unlikely that the man who was chosen tutor to a son of Constantine, should have been a person of that class.

In order to undervalue this excellent writer, you say, p. 129. that "he ascribed a beginning to the existence of the eternal Father. No wonder then," you add, "that he should ascribe a beginning to the Son's existence. You are welcome, Sir," you say, "to any advantage you
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“ may be able to derive from the authority of “ such a writer.” Lactantius, however, candidly construed, may perhaps be said only to have used an improper expression, namely, that *God made himself*, meaning no more than we do when we say that God is *self-existent*, which, in fact, implies the very contrary of what you ascribe to him. He advances this in proof of his general maxim, *Nec enim potest, ut ab ullo esse generatus, qui ipse universa generavit*, *he cannot be created of any who himself created all things*, which clearly implies that he could not be created at all. For though the *thing made* had a beginning, the *maker* could have none; and who was the *maker* in this case, but God himself? The term *self-existent* is, in fact (as will appear if it be analyzed) equally improper; for it implies that God is the *cause* of his own existence. For this reason, some who wish to speak with exactness, avoid that term, and rather say that God is *eternal*; but they do not tax those who use the the word *self-existent* with really believing that God had a beginning.

Whatever mistakes Lactantius may be supposed to have made as a *metaphysician*, it does not appear that in his own time he was charged with any; and they might have been as little noticed still, if he had been a *sound divine*; and though you suppose that he ascribed a beginning to the eternal Father, yet, if you had found that from the moment of the Father's existence, that

of the Son, had, in his idea, commenced also, you would perhaps have contented yourself with smiling at his notion, or at least have abated of the severity of your censure.

Constantine, whom you quote, p. 127. as in your favour, is directly against you. Taking your own words, he says, "the Son was begotten, or rather he himself came forth (being even ever in the Father) for the setting in order of the things which were made by him. Here," you say, "the emperor expounds *generation by coming forth*." But then, Sir, he does not say that this *generation*, or *coming forth*, was the same thing with *the setting in order the things that were made by him*; but it was evidently something that took place previous to this *setting in order*, and with a view to it; so that this mysterious *generation* preceded what you quaintly call *the projection of energies*, and was not the same thing with it.

You still, likewise confound the doctrine of Arius, p. 116. with that of the *personification of the Logos*, than which no two things were more different, having always been opposed to each other, as you must have known, had you been so well read, as you pretend to be, in the ancient ecclesiastical writers, since a great proportion of their works is occupied in the discussion of this subject. The Arians maintained that Christ was

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a being

a being *created out of nothing*, as other creatures were, notwithstanding the vastness of his powers, which were equal to the creation of all other things, visible and invisible; and not believing an eternal creation, they likewise said that there was a time when the Son did not exist. Both these propositions were denied by the orthodox of that age, who maintained that Christ was not made out of *nothing*, for that he was the *Logos*, the *wisdom*, the *power*, &c. of the Father, and that he had always existed in the Father as reason does in man, though his *personality* was by some supposed to have commenced in time. You must give me leave to say you are but little acquainted with the principles even of platonism, and especially those of the later platonists, from whom the christian Fathers more immediately derived their notions, if you are not able to enter into this idea.

This personification, or the commencement of an actual *personality* of what was an *attribute* of God, is a strange idea, but, strange as it is, it nevertheless actually took place in the minds of thousands, and was in truth all the orthodoxy of the earlier ages. This *incipient orthodoxy* grew immediately out of platonism, and is certainly absurd enough. The orthodoxy of the later ages, and of the present, grew out of that, and is infinitely more absurd. Their doctrine was mere *nonsense*, yours the plainest of all
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contradictions, as I shall clearly shew in my next letter.

“What difference there may be,” you say, p. 118. “between a making out of nothing, and the conversion of a mere attribute into a substance, or how a person made out of an attribute may differ from a person made out of nothing, I would rather, Sir, that you, than I, should take the trouble to explain.” I have explained it as well as such an absurdity can be explained, but it behoves you to explain it much more than it does me; for, absurd as the notion is, it certainly prepared the way for the still more absurd notion of *three equal divine persons in one godhead*.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIII.

Considerations relating to the Doctrine of the Trinity.

REV. SIR,

I Own I was particularly desirous of hearing what you could possibly say on the subject of my *seventh letter*, in which I advanced some general considerations relating to the doctrine of the *trinity*; but, unfortunately, you “content yourself,” p. 136. “with giving only a general reply to some parts of that letter. A particular answer,” you say, “to the several objections which it contains, would lead me into metaphysical disquisitions, which I wish to decline, because in that subject I foresee that we should want common principles and a common language.”

Now I make no doubt, Sir, but that, if it had been *possible* for you to have given any plausible answer to the difficulties started in that letter, you would have found some principle, common or uncommon, on which to found it, and some language also, which might have been intelligible to me and your readers. But as you profess that you do not expect to convince *me*, it would have been quite sufficient for your purpose, if you could

could have found common principles, and common language for others.

I am the more concerned at your silence, as I was in hopes of having some farther account of your own peculiar notion of *the necessary origin of the Son from the Father's contemplation of his own perfections*; but, to my great mortification, I find not one gleam of more light on this curious subject. You said that this doctrine was agreeable to the notions of all the Fathers, as well as to the sacred writers, and I challenged you to produce any authority for it, except what exists in your own imagination. In my opinion, nothing can be conceived more absurd than the idea of the necessary production of an intelligent being, possessed of actual substantial personality, equal in all respects to the original intelligent being, from the mere self-contemplation of that original being's perfections. I said that nothing in the Jewish Cabbala could be more absurd. You intimate, p. 149. that I may know but little of the Jewish Cabbala; but for my purpose it is quite enough, that it is a known proverbial expression to denote the *extreme of absurdity*; and if so, whatever the Jewish Cabbala may really be (of which I may perhaps know as much as yourself, and of which we may each of us soon learn enough from Basnage) the phrase could not be misapplied.

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I find,

I find, however, a few other things on the subject of that letter, which are curious enough ; so that, for the amusement, if not the instruction of my readers, I shall make some observations on them,

I.

In the first place, I still think that you yourself are not perfectly orthodox ; for besides your virtual disapprobation of the *damnatory clause* in the Athanasian creed, p. 165, you allow a real *superiority* in the Father. “ If,” you say, p. 145. “ from such expressions as *my Father is greater than I*, you would be content to infer that the “ Almighty Father is indeed the fountain and “ the center of divinity, and that the equality “ of godhead is to be understood with some mysterious subordination of the Son to the Father, “ you would have the concurrence of the ancient “ Fathers, and of the advocates of the true faith in “ all ages.” But give me leave to say, that any *proper subordination*, mysterious or not mysterious, implies *inferiority*, and is an infringement of the doctrine of the *perfect equality* of the three persons ; so that it cannot be, as your creed says, *none is afore or after another*. You say, p. 149. “ I maintain the equality of the three persons in “ all the attributes of the divine nature. I maintain their equality in rank and authority, with “ respect to all created things, whatever relations “ or differences may subsist between themselves.” But their equal superiority to all created beings is

is no proof at all of any proper equality among themselves. If so, all men would be equal among themselves, because all men are superior to brutes.

Your notion of a real subordination, which must imply *inferiority*, and indeed *imperfection*, in any of the persons in the trinity, is certainly not the orthodoxy that took place after the council of Nice, and that of the Athanasian creed,

II.

I now come to something still more extraordinary. "I maintain," you say, p. 148. "that the *three persons are one being*—I maintain that each person by himself is God; because each possesses fully every attribute of the divine nature." Then, Sir, I assert, that you maintain as palpable a *contradiction* as it is in the power of man to form an idea of. The term *being* may be predicated of every thing, and therefore, of each of the three persons in the trinity. For to say that Christ, for instance, is God, but that there is no *being*, no *substance*, to which his attributes may be referred, were manifestly absurd; and therefore when you say, that "each of these persons is by himself God," you must mean, and in effect say, that the Father separately considered, has a *being*, that the Son likewise, separately considered, has his *being*, and likewise, that the Holy Spirit separately considered, has his

his *being*. Now, Sir, if you will be pleased to count them up, you will find that you have got *three beings*, as well as *three persons*, and what can these three beings be but *three Gods*, without supposing that there are "three co-ordinate persons, " or three Fathers, three Sons, or three Holy " Ghosts." If you like an algebraic expression better than this, it will stand thus, $1+1+1=3$. Have the courage then, Sir, to speak out, and say what you must mean, if you have any meaning at all, that you worship *three Gods*.

But you say, p. 148. that " these three persons are all included in the very idea of a God, " and that for that reason, as well as for the identity of the attributes in each, it were impious " and absurd to say that there are three Gods." If there be any foundation for this remark, it must be impossible for any man to have an idea of a God, without having at the same time an idea of these three persons; and then either there cannot be any such thing as an unitarian, denying these three persons in the godhead, or else all unitarians are in fact *atheists*, having no idea of any God at all.

As you seem to have bewildered yourself very much upon the subject of *three persons and one God*, I shall enter a little farther into the metaphysical analysis of it. By the words *being, substance, substratum*, &c. we can mean nothing more than

than the *foundation*, as it were, of *properties*, or some thing to which, in our idea, we refer all the particular attributes of whatever exists. In fact, they are terms that may be predicated of every thing that is the subject of thought or discourse, all the discrimination of things depending upon their *peculiar properties*. So that whenever the properties differ, we say that there is a corresponding difference in the *things*, *beings*, or *substances* themselves. Consequently, if the Father, Son, and Spirit differ in any respect, so as to have *different properties*, either in relation to themselves, or to other beings, we must, according to the analogy of all language, say that they are *three different beings*, or *substances*.

Supposing again, that there is what you call an *identity of attributes* in each of them, so that, being considered one after the other, no difference could be perceived even in idea, as may be supposed to be the case of *three men*, who should perfectly resemble one another in all external and internal properties; and supposing, moreover, that there should be a perfect coincidence in all their thoughts and actions; though there might be a perfect *harmony* among them, and this might be called *unity*, they would still be *numerically three*. Consequently, though the Father, Son, and Spirit had no real differences, but as you say, p. 145. they had “the most perfect identity of
 “nature, the most entire unity of will, and
 “consent of intellect, and an incessant co-operation

“tion in the exertion of common powers, to a
 “common purpose,” yet would they, according
 to the analogy of language, not be *one God*, but
three Gods; or, which is the same thing, they
 would be *three beings*, with equal divine natures,
 just as the *three men* would be three beings with
 equal human natures.

Had you never heard of the *Parmenides*, I
 should have had some hopes of your understand-
 ing these *modern metaphysics*. But though I sup-
 pose I have left you far behind (perhaps gone to
 look into Plato, to see what he says on the sub-
 ject) I shall proceed without you, and give the
 modern reader my opinion with respect to the
 proper and only intelligible use of the word
person.

The term *being*, as I have observed, may be
 predicated of every thing, without distinction;
 but the term *person* is limited to *intelligent beings*.
 Three men, therefore, are not only three beings,
 but likewise three persons; the former is the
genus, and the latter the *species*. But a *person* is
 not less a *being* on this account; for each *man*
 may be said to be a *being*, as well as a *person*.
 Consequently, though the word *person* be pro-
 perly applied to each of the three component
 parts of your trinity, yet as *person* is a species,
 comprehended under the genus *being*, they must
 be *three beings*, as well as *three persons*.

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While you, Sir, are either absent, or wondering at these *novelties*, I proceed to observe, that the term *God* is a subdivision under the term *person*, because we define *God*, to be *an intelligent being possessed of all possible perfections*. Consequently, if the Father, Son, and Spirit, be each of them possessed of all possible perfections, which you do not deny, they are each of them *a person*, each of them *a being*, and each of them *a God*; and what is this but making *three Gods*. Avoid this conclusion from these principles, or assume other principles more just and natural, if you can.

These, Sir, if you be within hearing at all, are such metaphysics as you might have learned from Mr. Lock, if you had not been, unfortunately for yourself and your flock, poring so long over the *Pärmenides*. You will probably object to my definition of the word *person*, as applied to the doctrine of the trinity; but if you give any other definition, I will venture to assert, that you might as well say, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are three *Abracadabra's* as *three persons*. They will be equally words without meaning.

Athanasius, and many of the ancient Fathers, after the council of Nice, became absolute tritheists on this principle, believing that the Father, Son, and Spirit are no otherwise *one*, than as three particular men may be considered as one. Athanasius, considering this very difficulty, says, "since the Father is called God, the Son God,
"and

“ and the Holy Spirit God, how is it that there are “ not three Gods ?” he answers, “ because where “ there is a common nature, the name of the dig- “ nity is likewise common*.” And he illustrates this, by God’s calling the whole human race by the name of *man*, in the singular number, and by Moses’s speaking of the *horse* and the *horseman* being drowned in the Red Sea, when in fact, great numbers of each sort were intended. “ If “ this,” says he, “ be the case with respect to “ men, who differ so much as they do from each “ other, so that all men may be called *one man*, “ much more may we call the trinity one God, “ when their dignity is undivided, they have one “ kingdom, one power, will, and energy, which “ distinguishes the trinity from created things†.”

I am far from saying that Athanasius is consistent with himself in this account of the unity of the three persons in the trinity ; for he elsewhere says that there is *one God*, because there is *one unbegotten Father*, the sole fountain of deity, &c. but this representation occurs in many of the Fathers, and in my larger history I shall shew to what a variety of other miserable subterfuges the ortho-

* Κοι πως ρησι δυναται λεγεσθαι ο πατηρ θεος, η ο υιος θεος, η το πνευμα το αγιον θεος, η ε τρεις εισι θεοι ; ου κοινα τα της φύσεως. κοινον η ονομα της αξιας. De Comuni Essentia, Opera, vol. I. p. 213.

† Δια το κοινον της φύσεως πατα η οικουμενη εις ανθρωπον εκληθη. ουκ εδ εμερισος η αξια, μια βασιλεια, μια δυναμις, η βελη η ενεργεια, ιδιαζεσα την τριαδα απο της κτισεως, ενα λεγω θεος. Ibid. p. 214.

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dox were driven to maintain the unity of their trinity.

In the dialogue against the Macedonians, written after the age of Athanasius, the orthodox speaker is represented as saying, “as Paul, Peter, “and Timothy, are of one nature, and three hypostases; so I say, the Father, Son, and Holy “Spirit, are three hypostases, and one nature*.”

You say, p. 5. “The opinion of three persons “in the godhead, unrelated to each other, and “distinct in all respects, is rank tritheism; because what are unrelated, and distinct in all respects, are many in all respects; and being “many in all respects, cannot in any respect be “one.” But no *relation*, let it be ever so intimate, can remove their *numerical difference*. Let three men be *connected* in any manner that you can imagine, they can only be *one*, as partaking of the *same nature*, and therefore, though they resemble one another ever so much, they can only be said to be *similar* in all respects; but still they will be numerically *three*. In like manner, suppose any relations you please, known or unknown, between the three persons to whom the title of *God* equally belongs, they will no more make *one God*, than three related men can make

* Ὡςπερ παυλῷ, καὶ πέτρος, καὶ τιμοθεῷ, φύσεως μίας εἰσὶ καὶ τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις, ὅπως πατέρα, καὶ υἱόν, καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις λέγω, καὶ μίαν φύσιν. Opera, vol. II. p. 269.

one man, but must be numerically *three Gods*. Councils and synods, kings and houses of parliament, may decree that *three are one*, and archdeacons may defend the doctrine, but miracles cannot prove it. As you and your friends say with respect to some late proceedings in the Royal Society, "*Two and two* ever will be *four*, and the "*three angles of a triangle* will be equal to two "*right angles.*"

But I find it is in vain to appeal to reason, or even to the scriptures. Your doctrine of the trinity was not derived from reason, or the scriptures, but from Plato. "I then set myself," you say, p. 163. "to consider whether I knew "*enough of the divine unity*, to pronounce the "*trinity an infringement* of it. Upon this point, "the Platonists, whose acquaintance I now began to cultivate, soon brought me to a right "*mind.*"

They did the same good office for Austin before you, and I fear they are still doing the same for others, notwithstanding the cautions given us in the scriptures against the mixture of vain and absurd philosophy with christianity. You kindly advise me to take the same course. "If," you say, p. 142, "you imagine that the absolute "*unity of the divine substance* is more easily to "*be explained than the trinity*, let me entreat "you Sir, to read the Parmenides. It is, indeed, "in Plato's school, if any where, that a man's "*eyes*

“ eyes are likely to be opened to his own ignorance.” But, Sir, what must they do who cannot read the *Parmenides*? I suppose they must go without the doctrine of the trinity, and like the lower order of christians in the time of Origen, be content with the *corporeal gospel*, the plain doctrine of *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. But with this the apostle Paul was contented, and so am I.

I have, however, read the *Parmenides*, and though I expect you will exult over me as usual, calling me, p. 15. *a child in platonism*, and say, that “ *I cannot apprehend a platonic notion when it is clearly set before me,*” p. 124, I have no scruple to declare, that I was not able to get one ray of good sense from the whole of it; I should even think the extracting of sun-beams from cucumbers the more hopeful project of the two. And so far am I from advising the reading of it for any useful purpose, that I should rather say, if a man perceives any incipient cloudiness in his head, and wishes to have the little understanding that he has left utterly confounded, let him read the *Parmenides* *. I shall

* Among other *mysteries*, as Mr. Sydenham call them, of the *Parmenides*, Plato, after shewing that *littleness* cannot belong either to the *whole* or the *part* of any thing, concludes, that “ *nothing is little but littleness itself,*” ὅς τις ἐστὶ μικρὸν πλὴν αὐτῆς τῆς μικροῦσιν. It would be no bad parody on this to say, Nothing is nonsensical but nonsense itself; and this nonsense (if it can exist in the abstract) is in the *Parmenides*.

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say the same with respect to almost all the metaphysics of the ancients; and it is very possible that I may have given as much attention to these things as you have done, though I have not been so ostentatious of it. Any person since the time of Mr. Locke, may say this of all the ancients without much arrogance. So far, however, I agree with you, that the study of the Parmenides may do very well by way of preparation for that of the doctrine of the trinity*.

III.

Perhaps the most extraordinary part of your whole performance, is what you say of the *mysteriousness of the doctrine of the divine unity*, and of the unitarians having nothing to plead for themselves but single texts of scripture, interpreted in a figurative manner. "If the word" (spoken of by John) you say, p. 138, "be the divine attribute *wisdom*, then that attribute, in the degree which "was equal to the formation of the universe, in this "view of the scripture doctrine, was conveyed entire into the mind of a mere man, the son of a Jewish carpenter. A much greater difficulty, in "my apprehension, than any that is to be found in "the catholic faith."

* If *Plato's school* has this talismanic power of *opening a man's eyes to his own ignorance*, I would advise Dr. Horsley to continue in it a while longer; for this is a branch of science in which he has yet something to learn. Nor will it be amiss if he take his *good and able ally* along with him; though, as it will lessen his presumption, it may hurt him as a *Reviewer*, which, no doubt, ought to be considered.

In reading this, and other passages in your *Letters*, I cannot help admiring your talent of lessening the difficulties of your own scheme, and magnifying those of others. If you use the same telescope, you certainly turn different ends to different objects.

Pray, Sir, what Socinian ever maintained that “the divine attribute wisdom, in the degree which “was equal to the formation of the universe, was “conveyed entire into the mind of Jesus Christ?” What we believe, and all that is required by our interpretation of the *logos* (as meaning the divine attribute, *wisdom*) is, that a *portion* only of the same wisdom that formed the universe, was communicated to Christ, a portion sufficient to enable him to do what he actually did, and to say what he actually said. The Socinians do not believe that Christ made the universe, or that he was any way instrumental in making it.

For my own part, I never before heard of, or suspected, any difficulty in God’s making man the instrument, by which to do what man alone could not do. Did not God suggest to Moses what he could not have delivered of himself? In many of the miracles which attended the release of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and their passage through the wilderness, Moses was the immediate, or ostensible agent, but the *power* was of God; and yet this was no proper infusing of the divine power into Moses. The power was still the incommuni-

cable attribute of the Divine Being. Accordingly, Jesus says, that it was not *himself*, but the *father within him*, or acting by him, that did the works; and that the *words which he spake were not his own*. Moreover, he says of the apostles, that they should do greater things than he himself had done. From this, then, you ought to conclude, that the divine attributes of wisdom and power were conveyed entire into the minds of the apostles, or even that they were Gods superior to Christ. Such reasoning as this, I have hardly patience to refute. But, surely, you cannot be serious in saying that this difficulty in the Socinian scheme is equal to that of *three persons in one God* in the Athanasian trinity, or to that in your own account of the Platonic trinity.

But perhaps the most extraordinary part of your whole work will be thought to be the following. In answer to my saying that "many passages in scripture inculcate the doctrine of the divine unity in the clearest and strongest manner," you say, p. 141. "Be pleased, Sir, to produce one of the many;" meaning evidently, that there is no such passage; and p. 17. you add, "the unitarians themselves *pretend* not that their doctrine is to be found in the plain literal sense of holy writ. On the contrary, they take the greatest pains to explain away the literal meaning."

Now, Sir, if you had really read any unitarian treatise at all, you must have known that this representation

sentation is the reverse of the fact. We unitarians certainly *pretend* at least, whether we be able to prove it or not, that the *general tenor, and plain literal sense of Scripture* is in our favour, that they are only *particular texts*, and those ill-understood, that you avail yourselves of; and we say, that there is no difficulty in interpreting even those texts in perfect consistency with the unitarian doctrine, if the true idiom of the language be considered.

You complain of my not *reading*, but only *looking through* authors. But surely, you cannot have even *looked through* the very *Letters* of mine that you are professedly replying to. Let me therefore, bring again before your view, a paragraph or two in those letters, which, as far as *pretensions* go, directly contradict your confident assertion. See p. 90. where you will find as follows: "I
 " will venture to say, that for one text in which
 " you can pretend to find any thing harsh or
 " difficult to me, I will engage to produce ten
 " that shall create more difficulty to you. How
 " strangely must you torture the plainest lan-
 " guage, and in which there is not a shadow of
 " figure, to interpret to your purpose, 1 Tim. ii.
 " 5. *There is one God, and one mediator between*
 " *God and man, the man Christ Jesus.* 1 Cor. viii.
 " 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom*
 " *are all things and we in him, and one Lord Jesus*
 " *Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him; or*
 " that expression of our Saviour himself, John

“ xvii. 2. *That they might know thee, the only true*
 “ *God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*
 “ Never upbraid us unitarians with torturing
 “ the scriptures, while you have these, and a hun-
 “ dred other plain texts, to strain at, and to bend
 “ to your Athanasian hypothesis; besides many
 “ *general arguments*, from reason and the scrip-
 “ tures, of more real force than any particular
 “ texts, to answer.”

This, Sir, was certainly answering your chal-
 lenge to produce *one plain text* in favour of the
 unitarian doctrine before it was thrown out. I
 appeal to yourself for the obvious sense of the
 passages I have now recited; and you say, p. 23.
 “ It is a principle with me, that the true sense of
 “ any phrase in the New Testament is what may
 “ be called its standing sense, that which will be
 “ the first to occur to common people, of every
 “ country, and in every age*.”

I would also refer you to a small piece I lately
 published, entitled *A general View of the Arguments*
for the Unity of God, and against the Divinity and Pre-
existence of Christ, from Reason, from the Scriptures,
and from History, which you seem to have seen, as
 you refer to my *two penny pamphlets*, for this is

* It is remarkable, that the orthodox, even after the council
 of Nice, complained of the advantage which the unitarians had
 in appealing to the literal sense of the scriptures. “ If,” says
 Gregory Nyssen, “ a man rests in the bare letter, so far he
 judaizes in opinion, and has not learned that a christian is
 “ not

sold for two-pence. There you will find, not only that Socinians pretend to have the clear sense of scripture in their favour, but many of those passages, expressive of that clear sense, produced, I there observe, p. 10. that “the scriptures contain the clearest and the most express declarations, that there is but *one God*, without ever mentioning any exception in favour of a trinity, or guarding us against being led into any mistake by such general and unlimited expressions.” And if this language, as you suppose, always respected the multiplicity of gods among the heathens, why is this one God, in the New Testament, always called the *Father*, and even *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; and why are we no where told that this one God is the *trinity*, consisting of *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*? This, Sir, is the language of your litany only. The Bible used in

“not the disciple of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” Ουκ εν, ει φιλω παραμεινει τω γραμματι, κ̃ κα̃τα τυτο το μερος Ιουδαζει τη γνωμη, κ̃ επω πεπειδευ̃ται οτι εκ̃ι γραμματος̃ ε̃σι χριστιαν̃ μαθη̃ης, αλλα̃ πνευμα̃. το γαρ̃ γραμμα, φησιν, απεκ̃λεινει, το δ̃ ε̃ πνευμα ζωοποιει. Contra Eunomium Oratio xvi. Opera, Vol. II. p. 341.

It is to be observed, that by *judaizing* was meant adopting the doctrine of *the simple humanity of Christ*. For the ancient unitarians were commonly compared by the orthodox to *Jews*, and the *Arians* to *Gentiles*, as worshipper of *two Gods*, the Arian *logos* not being of the same substance with the Father; and therefore a maker of the world, or a God, quite distinct from him.

our conventicles, contains no such barbarous jargon.

I would also recommend to your perusal another pamphlet of mine, called *An Appeal to the serious and candid Professors of Christianity*, of which more than ten thousand have been sold for a penny each; and of this I have lately published a new edition, and have annexed to it the remarkable *Trial of Mr. Elwall*, of Wolverhampton, in this neighbourhood, for his publications in defence of the Socinian doctrine. These small publications of mine have, I trust, done much good, though you will call it much mischief, in this country; and I rejoice in perceiving the increase of this good, or this mischief, every day; and I have no doubt of the successful spread of religious truth by means of these publications, notwithstanding all you can do to counteract them, as you boast, by means of the Monthly Review.

IV.

In one thing I am glad to find that you and I entertain the same opinion, which is that there is no medium between admitting the simple humanity of Christ, and that he is properly God. "Having once admitted," you say p. 162. "his
"pre-existence in an exalted state, I saw the ne-
"cessity of placing him at the head of the crea-
"tion, Being thus convinced that our Lord
Jesus

“ Jesus Christ is indeed the maker of all things,
 “ I found that I could not rest satisfied with
 “ the notion of *a maker of the universe, not*
 “ *God.* I saw that all the extravagancies of the
 “ Gnostics hung upon that one principle, and I
 “ could have little opinion of the truth of a principle,
 “ which seemed so big with mischief.”

You also observe, very justly, p. 137. “ Can
 “ any power or wisdom less than the supreme be a
 “ sufficient ground for the trust we are required to
 “ place in providence? Make the wisdom and
 “ the power of our ruler what you please, still, upon
 “ the Arian principle, it is the wisdom and the
 “ power of a creature. Where then will be the
 “ certainty that the evil which we find in the world
 “ has not crept in through some imperfection in
 “ the original contrivance, or in the present manage-
 “ ment; since every intellect below the first may
 “ be liable to error, and any power short of the su-
 “ preme may be inadequate to purposes of a cer-
 “ tain magnitude? But if evil may have crept in
 “ thus, what assurance can we have that it will ever
 “ be extirpated?”

But if there be no proper medium between the
 Athanasian and the Socinian scheme, which I readily
 admit, I also maintain that there is no medium at
 all between the Socinian doctrine and an absolute
 contradiction, for such Athanasianism is; so that
 there is no resource but in the Socinian doctrine,
 oppose it as much as you will.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIV.

Of Prayer to Christ.

REV. SIR,

HAVING got *three persons*, all of them possessed of all divine perfections, all of them having intercourse with mankind, and consequently all of them naturally *objects of prayer*, I do not wonder that you appear to be a little embarrassed in your ideas of what is proper to be done with respect to each of them, individually considered. "That the Father," you say, p. 103. "is *a* proper object of prayer, God forbid that I should ever not acknowledge. That he "is *the* proper object, in the sense in which you "seem to make the assertion, in prejudice and "exclusion of the other persons, God forbid that "I should ever concede. I deny not that there is "an honour personally due to him as the Father. "There is also an honour personally due to the "Son, as the Son, and to the Spirit as the Spirit, "but our knowledge of the personal distinctions "is so obscure, in comparison of our apprehension of the general attributes of the godhead, "that it should seem that *the divinity* (the *θεος*) "is rather to be generally worshipped in "the three persons jointly, and indifferently, "than

“ than that any distinct honours are to be offered
 “ to each separately. Prayer, however, for
 “ succour against external persecution, seems
 “ addressed with particular propriety to the Son.”

Now, Sir, as this is a thing that relates to *practice*, I should have imagined that, if each of the three persons had been to be addressed separately, we should have been distinctly informed concerning the circumstances in which we were to pray to one of them, and not to the others; considering how difficult it must be, from the nature of the thing, for mere men to distinguish the separate rights of *three divine persons*. That you yourself have made some mistake in this business, will not, I think, be difficult to shew. In order to this, let us consider how your *supposition* or *theory*, corresponds to the *fact*. For if it be not supported by corresponding facts, how ingenious, or probable, soever it may seem to be, *a priori*, it must fall to the ground. You will agree with me, I imagine, that the apostles and primitive christians knew whether the Father or the Son was the more proper object of prayer in the time of persecution. Let us see then both what *directions* they gave, and also what they themselves actually *did* in this case.

The apostle James, writing to christians in a state of persecution, says, ch. i. 2. &c. *My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, or trials,*

trials, &c. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.* You will hardly say that in this he advises them to apply to *Christ*, or to *the trinity*, for direction in these circumstances. If you do, I will venture to assert, that your hypothesis has no countenance either in the scriptures, or in any christian writer before the council of Nice. For they all understood *the Father alone* to be intended whenever mention is made of *God* absolutely.

Peter, writing to christians in the same situation, says, 1 Pet. iv. 19. *wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator.* This is certainly meant of God the Father; but more evidently must we so interpret, 1 Pet. v. 10. *The God of all grace, who has called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.* I do not find here, or any where else in the scriptures, any direction to pray to Christ in time of persecution, or indeed, in any other circumstances.

Let us now attend to some particulars in the *history* of the apostles. When Herod had put to death James, the brother of John, and imprisoned Peter, we read, Acts xii. 5. that *prayer was made without ceasing of the church to God, not to Christ, for him.* When Paul and Silas were in prison at Philippi, we read, Acts xvi. 25. that *they*

they sung praises to God, not to Christ. And when Paul was warned of what would befall him if he went to Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 14. he said, *the will of the Lord be done*. This, you must suppose, was meant of *God the Father*, because Christ himself used the same language in this sense, when, in praying to the Father, he said, *Not my will but thine be done*.

These, you may perhaps say, are only *incidental circumstances*, on which no great stress is to be laid. But in Acts vi. 24. &c. we have a prayer of some length addressed to God the Father, at the very beginning of the persecution of christians, when Peter and John had been examined before the high priest, and his court, and had been threatened by them. As I suspect that you may not have given much attention to the tenor of it, I shall recite the whole, which is as follows:
 “ And when they heard that, they lifted up their
 “ voice to God, with one accord, and said, Lord,
 “ thou art God, who hast made heaven and earth,
 “ and the sea, and all that in them is; who by
 “ the mouth of thy servant David, hast said, *Why*
 “ *did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain*
 “ *things, The kings of the earth stood up, and the*
 “ *rulers were gathered together, against the Lord,*
 “ *and against his Christ*. For of a truth against thy
 “ holy child” (or servant) “ Jesus whom thou hast
 “ anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with
 “ the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were
 “ gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy
 “ hand

“ hand and thy counsel determined before to be
 “ done. And now Lord behold their threat-
 “ nings, and grant unto thy servants, that with
 “ all boldness they may speak thy word, by
 “ stretching forth thy hand to heal; and that
 “ signs and wonders may be done by the name
 “ of thy holy child” (or servant) “ Jesus.”

We have now examined some particulars both of the *instructions*, and the *examples* of scripture, with regard to the proper object of prayer in time of persecution; from which it appears, that, even in this case, we have no authority to pray to any other than that one God, to whom Christ himself prayed in his affliction; and if we be not authorized to pray to Christ in time of persecution, there is, by your own acknowledgment, less propriety in praying to him on any other occasion.

As you profess a great regard for those who are called *apostolical Fathers*, let us attend to the prayer of Polycarp, when he was tied to the stake, ready to be burned alive. Now this prayer which is a pretty remarkable one, is addressed to God the Father, and not to Christ; so that this disciple of the apostle John, did not think the example of Stephen any precedent for him. The prayer begins as follows: “ O Lord, God Almighty, the Father of thy well-beloved and “ blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of thee, the God of
 angels

“angels and powers, and of every creature, and
 “especially of the whole race of just men,” &c.

You see then, Sir, how greatly you have been misled by your *speculative theology*, by your attention to particular texts, single incidents, and imaginary *proprieties*, without attending to the general tenor of scripture, the plain directions that are there given for our conduct, and the constant practice of the apostles, which supply the best interpretation of their doctrine. To conclude, as you have done, from the single case of Stephen, that all christians are authorised to pray to Christ, is like concluding that all matter has a tendency to go upwards, because a needle will do so, when a magnet is held over it. When you shall be in the same circumstances with Stephen, having your mind strongly impressed with a vision of Christ sitting at the right-hand of God, you may then, perhaps, be authorised to address yourself to him as he did; but the whole tenor of the scriptures proves that, otherwise, you have no authority at all for any such practice.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R X V.

Of the Unitarian Principles with respect to Mahometanism and Infidelity.

REV. SIR,

WE are not, I hope, to judge of your acquaintance with the opinions of the ancients, (which we have dignified with the name of *learning*) by the correctness with which you state the opinions of the moderns, even those which you undertake to controvert, and therefore ought to have studied. Here, Sir, you certainly have no choice but of the grossest *ignorance*, and consequently *presumption*, or the most perverse and wilful of all misrepresentations. Your ignorance of the state of the dissenters, of which a sufficient specimen has been given, shews that you are far from being *at home* even in your own country; but the account you give in your sixteenth letter, of the principles of the unitarians, and the relation they bear to those of unbelievers, is such as can hardly be accounted for from mere ignorance. I fear it has a worse origin. I hope I shall not be thought uncandid; but I cannot put any favourable construction upon your insinuations on this subject.

You

You say, p. 151. "the whole difference between you and them" (that is, between the unitarians and Mahometans) "seems very inconsiderable. The true mussulman believes as much, or rather more, of Christ than the unitarian requires to be believed; and though the unitarians have not yet recognized the divine mission of Mahomet, there is good ground to think they will not long stand out. In unitarian writings of the last century, it is allowed of Mahomet, that he had no other design than to restore the belief of the unity of God.—Of his religion, that it was not meant for a new religion, but for a restitution of the true intent of the christian.—Of the great prevalence of the Mahometan religion, that it has been owing not to force and the sword, but to that one truth contained in the Alcoran, the unity of God. With these friendly dispositions towards each other, it should seem that the Mahometan and unitarian might easily be brought to agree."

Now all these propositions which you have laid down as *certain facts*, are so highly improbable in themselves, that few persons, perhaps, will believe that you can be serious in advancing them; and I shall think myself at liberty to treat them as groundless calumnies, till you shall produce some authority or evidence for them. For the state of things, as they now are, and which ought to be known to you, gives not the least

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colour

colour of plausibility to them. If the difference between the unitarians and the Mahometans be so inconsiderable, that there is good ground to think that the unitarians will soon acknowledge the divine mission of Mahomet, how has it happened that none of them have yet done it, and actually turned mussulmen? I think it is possible that, notwithstanding the extensive reading of which you give us so many intimations, I may be as well acquainted with the unitarian writers of the last age as you can pretend to be; and I have never met with any such passage as you mention; and I think if you could have produced any such in support of your assertions, you would not have failed to do it.

You may at any time see what I have said of the Mahometan religion on several occasions, and also what other unitarians of the present age have advanced concerning it. Do you find in my publications, or theirs, any thing favourable to the pretensions of Mahomet? And if the tendency of the unitarian principles be to approximate towards those of the Mahometans, it might be expected that they would have been nearer to each other now than they were in the last century. I shall therefore, unless authorities are produced, consider what you have said on this subject as another specimen of your *invention* of *facts*, and of your unparalleled effrontery in publishing them, in order to throw an odium upon the unitarians. You might indeed almost

as well assert that all the unitarians in England are already so far Mahometans, that, to your certain knowledge, they are actually circumcised. What respect, Sir, can be due to the man who has not scrupled to have recourse to these calumnies, for they cannot be called by any softer name, in order to blacken his adversaries? And what can we think of the *cause* that requires to be thus supported?

Your curious account of “the negociation regularly opened,” p. 152, “on the part of the English unitarians in the reign of Charles the Second, with the ambassador of the emperor of Morocco,” for which you quote Dr. Leslie, was probably an invention of his, similar to those of yours in these Letters, and calculated to answer a similar purpose. As it is a *stale business*, it may be sufficient to give a *stale answer* to it, and therefore, without examining into the history of what passed in the reign of Charles the Second, I shall content myself with copying what Mr. Emlyn said in answer to it, which is as follows:

“As to your rarity of the address to the Morocco ambassador, I see not what it amounts to, more than a complaint of the corruption of the christian faith in the article of one God, which the Mahometans have kept by consent of all sides. Yet for as much as I can learn nothing from any unitarians of any such address

" dress from them, nor do you produce any sub-
 " scribers names, I conclude no such address
 " was ever made by any deputed from them,
 " whatever any single person might do. I sup-
 " pose you conclude from the *matter* of it, that
 " it must be from some unitarian, and perhaps
 " so; yet you may remember that so you con-
 " cluded from the matter of Dr. Tillotson's
 " sermons, that they were a Socinian's." Em-
 lyn's Work, vol. II. p. 93.

After being represented as having made near
 approaches to Mahometanism, I cannot be sur-
 prized that you should seem to insinuate that I
 am an unbeliever in christianity. For certainly I
 can be no less, if what you say, p. 106. be true.
 " With your notion of inspiration, you are at
 " liberty to dispute what the inspired apostles
 " taught." Here is no exception made with re-
 spect to any thing that they taught, and even
 what they taught from inspiration. I do not
 personally require any acknowledgment for these
 gross misrepresentations, but the Public, whom
 you have imposed upon, have a right to demand
 it of you.

Your endeavour to shew the little value of
 christianity on the unitarian principles, besides
 shewing your disposition to calumniate, discovers
 equal ignorance both of the state of the world, and
 of the system of revelation. You talk, p. 154. of
 " sober

“sober deists, who rejecting revelation, acknowledge, however, the obligations of morality, believe a providence, and a future retribution. The whole difference between them and us,” you make them say, “is that we believe the same things upon different evidence, you upon the testimony of a man, who you say, was raised up to preach these truths; we upon the evidence of reason, which we think a higher evidence than any human testimony,” &c.

I wish, Sir, you would produce a few of these *sober deists*. I think I am acquainted with as many unbelievers as you are; but whatever may have been the case formerly, I know no such persons at present as you describe; i. e. unbelievers who have a serious expectation of a future life. We may see from fact, that the arguments from reason alone, are unable to make any lasting impression on the minds of those who can resist the much plainer evidences of christianity; which, being of the historical kind, are much better adapted to carry conviction to the mind.

The present state of things furnishes an abundant proof that it is by the gospel alone, that life and immortality are fully brought to light. This gives the most satisfactory of all evidence of a future life, such as we see can really influence the heart and the life; such as can controul the strongest passions of the human breast, and give

men a manifest superiority of mind to the world and all the pleasures and pains of it.

To imagine, as you do, that the arguments for a future life from *reason alone*, that is, from appearances in the common course of nature, are at all comparable to the evidence that results from the gospel history, and especially from the death and resurrection of Christ (a man like ourselves, and therefore, the most proper pattern of a future universal resurrection) discovers such a want of real discernment and judgment, and such ignorance of human nature, as I will venture to say, are no where more conspicuous than in these letters of yours.

Your representation of the doctrine of *materialism* as favourable to *atheism*, only shews your ignorance of the system that you wish to expose, as indeed what you dropped on the subject of *ideas*, p. 113. sufficiently shewed before. But upon this I have said so much (more I suppose than you will ever take the trouble to read) in my *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever*, that I shall not reply to such trite and idle reasoning as yours here.

What you say on the subject of the *resurrection*, if it has any weight at all, affects the christian doctrine, as taught by St. Paul. "The hope which you hold out," you say, p. 156 "of a resurrection, he" (the unbeliever) "will tell you

“you is no hope at all, even admitting that the
 “evidence of the thing could, upon your prin-
 “ciples, be indisputable. The atoms which
 “compose *me*, your atheist will say, may indeed
 “have composed a man before, and may again;
 “but *me* they will never more compose, when
 “once the present *me* is dissipated. I have no
 “no recollection of a former, and no concern
 “about a future self.”

This might have been copied from the writings of the heathen philosophers against christianity. For if, as I have already intimated, there be any force in the objection, it will operate against the doctrine of a resurrection universally considered. Because, if the thing that dies (and it is the body only that is ever said to die) do not rise, and come to life again, there is no proper resurrection at all.

Whatever hope of a future life you may build on the Platonic doctrine of a *soul*, it is, I will venture to say, universally abandoned by the philosophical unbelievers of the present age; and, therefore, with respect to them, you can never establish any hope of a future life at all on any other principles than those *purely christian ones* which you endeavour to expose; and whatever difficulties may attend the consideration of it, they will all vanish, even to the philosophical mind, before the certain promise of that great

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being who made us and all things. If we *once* believe that *he* has given us this assurance, we can never suppose that he will be at a loss for proper means to accomplish his end; and if the gospel history be true, we have this assurance. But from natural appearances we have no evidence whatever of any thing belonging to man that can subsist, feel, and act, when the body is in the grave. And what I maintain is, that we must depart from all the known rules of philosophizing, before we can conclude that any such thing belongs to man.

From the same mode of reasoning by which we can prove that there is an immaterial principle in *man*, we may also prove that there is such a principle not only in a *brute*, or a *plant*, but even in a *magnet*, and the most inanimate parts of nature. For even the most inanimate parts of nature are possessed of *powers*, or *properties*, between which and what we see and feel of them, we are not able to perceive any connexion whatever. There is just as much connexion between the principles of *sensation* and *thought* and the brain of a man, as between the powers of a magnet and the iron of which it is made, or between the principle of gravitation and the matter of which the earth and the sun are made; and whenever you shall be able to deduce the powers of a magnet from the other properties of iron, you may perhaps be able to deduce the powers of sensation
I and

and thought from the other properties of the brain. But to you, Sir, the whole of this subject is absolutely *terra incognita*. I perceive no traces of your being much *at home*, as you pretend, in the Greek language, but here you are a perfect stranger.

You are pleased to supply unbelievers with objections to revelation on the views that I have given of it; but I can produce numbers who will tell you, that such christianity as yours, including the belief of three persons in one God, is a thing absolutely incapable of proof, and who have actually rejected it on account of this doctrine, which they consider as so palpable an *absurdity*, and *contradiction*, as not even miracles can make credible.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XVI.

Of Bishop Bull's Defence of damnatory Clauses.

REV. SIR,

IN this letter I shall exhibit a curious specimen of your peculiar mode of controversial writing, and the advantage you take of the most trifling oversights in your opponents.

You gave the highest encomiums to the works of Bishop Bull, without any qualification or distinction, and recommended them to your clergy, as an infallible guide in every thing relating to the subject of our controversy. On this I said, "As you recommend the writings of Bishop Bull without exception, I presume that you approve of his defence of the damnatory clause in the Athanasian creed. Indeed you mentioned it among his most valuable works." When I wrote this, I did not, to be sure, look into the title-page of the book, in order to copy the very words of it; but no person could have any doubt which of Bishop Bull's treatises I really meant, as what I said sufficiently characterized it. And though he does not mention the Athanasian creed in particular, he defends every thing that is harsh and severe in the treatment of unitarians

unitarians by the orthodox in the primitive times, and particularly the anathema annexed to the Nicene creed.

On this subject, however, you write as follows, p. 165. "Sir, did you write this in your
 "sleep, or is it in a dream only that I seem to
 "read it. Bishop Bull's defence of the damna-
 "tory clause! From you, Sir, I have now my
 "first information that Bishop Bull ever wrote
 "upon the subject." Then, enumerating the
 titles of his works, you add, p. 167. "In these
 "treatises there is no defence of the damnatory
 "clause, nor, that I recollect, any mention of the
 "Athanasian creed. There is no defence of the
 "damnatory clause in the Sermons and English
 "Tracts, published by Mr. Nelson, nor can I find
 "any such tract mentioned by Mr. Nelson among
 "the Bishop's lost works; for many small pieces,
 "which it was known he had written, were never
 "found after his death. Where have I men-
 "tioned, Sir, with such high approbation a work
 "which I declare I have never seen, and of
 "which, you will forgive me, if I still doubt the
 "existence?"

Notwithstanding this ridiculous parade, which hath helped to swell out your book, you might just as well have said, that I never wrote an Answer to your *Charge*, merely because I called my work *Letters to Dr. Horsley*; and I will engage, that whatever doubt you might have had, if you had given an order to any bookseller in London

in the very words that I used, he would have sent you the *Judicium*, &c. i. e. *The Judgment of the Catholic Church in the three first Centuries, concerning the Necessity of believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God.* Now, Sir, what is implied in the *necessity of believing*, but the condemnation of those who do not believe? The whole truth, and the occasion of all this lamentable outcry is, that, not having the book before me at the time, I said *the damnatory clause in the Athanasian creed*, instead of the *anathema annexed to the Nicene creed*, a thing of exactly the same nature.

Besides, from your account, one would imagine that, as you declare *yourself* no lover of damnatory clauses, this good bishop, whose writings you so much recommend, was no more a friend to them than yourself, but that he might be the meekest and most candid of all christians. To give a specimen, therefore, of this most excellent prelate's writings, I shall produce a few passages from the preface of this particular work, from which a judgment may be formed of the *object* and *spirit* of the whole.

Giving a reason for this publication, he says,
 " There have appeared a few years ago in Eng-
 " land, many writings of wicked men, who have
 " laboured with all their might to overturn the
 " capital article of our creed, on which the hinge
 " of christianity certainly turns, namely, con-
 " cerning the Son of God, born of God the Fa-
 " ther himself before all ages, very God of very
 " God,

“ God, by whom all things were made ; who for
 “ our salvation was incarnate, and made man ;
 “ some of them impudently defending the Arian,
 “ and some the Samosaténian blasphemy*.”

He then quotes with approbation, a passage from Zanchius, in which he calls the writings of the unitarians *idle ravings, inepta deliria* ; and afterwards speaking of Episcopius, and others, who though orthodox themselves, pleaded for some moderation towards these erring brethren, he calls it “ an attempt to reconcile Christ and Belial,” and adds, “ These men, professing to hold and believe with the catholics (in which I wish they were sincere) in the truth of the article concerning the co-essential Son of God, yet do not acknowledge the necessity of it†.” Then, with respect to their maintaining that the christian Fathers had the same moderation, he says, “ It is throwing the greatest reproach upon the doctors, bishops, confessors, and martyrs of the best ages ; as if in defending the

* Prodiere in Anglia nostra, intra paucos abhinc annos, scripta, non pauca hominum nefariorum, qui dogma fidei nostræ *χρυσωλον*, in quo cerre christianismi cardo vertitur (de filio nempe dei ante omnia secula, ex ipso deo patre, nato, vero deo de vero deo, per quem omnia condita fuere, nostræ salutis causa incarnato, homineque facto) labefactare atque evertere omni ope adnisi sunt ; eorum aliis Arianam, aliis vero Samosaténianam blasphemiam impudenter propugnantibus.

† Hi homines, cum veritatem articuli de co-essentiali dei filio cum catholicis se tenere atque credere profitantur (utinam sincere) ejusdem tamen necessitatem minime agnoscunt.

“ greatest

“greatest of all the articles of the christian religion,
 “they were lukewarm, yea, absolutely cold;—
 “whereas all those churches with one voice and
 “judgment condemned the Arian and Socinian
 “doctrine, as a most pernicious and deadly heresy*.”

He farther says that, as in his former works he had defended the *Nicene creed itself*, so in this, “he maintains and defends the *anathema annexed to it*, viz. “those who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, that he did not exist before he was born, and that he was made out of nothing, or out of any other hypostasis or substance, that he was either created, or subject to change or alteration, the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes †.”

He concludes the preface with saying, “This judgment of the universal church of Christ, in all times, all pious and sober minded persons will reverence; and therefore will be upon their guard

* Adeoque consequenter optimorum sæculorum doctoribus, episcopis, confessoribus, martyribus, gravissimam imposuerit contumeliam; quasi scilicet, in tutando capite religionis christianæ omnium maximo, tepidi, imo prorsus frigidi fuissent.— Quam ecclesiæ illæ omnes ut hæresin perniciosissimam ac Satanasæ consensienti calculo ac judicio damnaverunt.

† In hoc opusculo αναθεματίζον symbolo isto annexum tuemur ac defendimus—τες δὲ λόγοις αὐτοῦ οὗτις καὶ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα γεννηθῆναι καὶ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν ἐγενήσθαι, ἢ ἐξ ἑτέρας οὐσιῶν ἢ οὐσίας φασκαλίας εἶναι, ἢ κτιστοῦ, ἢ τρεῖς ὄντες, ἢ ἀλλοιωτοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, τὰς ἀναθεματίζει καὶ καταδικάζει ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία.

“against,

“ against, and with all their souls abhor, the God
 “ denying heresy of both the Somofatenians and the
 “ Arians*.”

I need not, surely, go any farther into a work of which this is the preface. I am tempted, however, to quote, the form in which the bishop closes this work, viz. “ To the most holy and undivided Trinity, to God the Father, and to his co-essential and co-eternal word, and Son, for our salvation made incarnate, together with the Holy Spirit the comforter, be all praise, honour and glory, from angels and men, for ever and ever amen†.”

Can you read all this, Sir, and not acknowledge that Bishop Bull was a friend to damnatory clauses; and if you be not so yourself, as you say you are not, how came you to recommend the writings of this fiery bishop so unreservedly as you have done? and indeed, how can you be a true member of that church which gives its sanction to these damnatory clauses. Those damnatory clauses are as much an article of faith in the church of England,

* Hoc judicium ecclesiæ Christi universalis omnium temporum revere buntur certè pii ac sobrii omnes, adeoque ab ἀπορριθισμῷ Samefatenianorum simul et Arianorum hæresi cavebunt sibi, totoque animo abhorrebunt.

† Sanctissimæ atque individuæ trinitati, Deo patri, co-essentiali et coæterno verbo ac filio, nostræ salutis causâ incarnato, una cum Spiritu sancto paracleto, ab angelis et hominibus tribuatur laus, honos, et gloria omnis in secula seculorum, Amen.

as any of the *thirty-nine*, and he that does not *bona fide* maintain them, ought, in my opinion, to quit her communion. You, Sir, therefore, either do, or ought to believe, that myself and all who think as I do, shall *without doubt perish everlastingly*. If you cannot say *amen* to this *curse*, you have no business where you are, and certainly ought not to pronounce it. For this, your Athanasian creed asserts, and I suppose no *figure* was intended by the devout composer of it.

The first time that Bishop Bull's writings were recommended to me, was by a popish priest, in whose company I passed several days at Brussels, who took serious pains to make me a Roman catholic, and afterwards wrote to me very earnestly on the subject. But paying too little attention to the recommendation, I was unacquainted with the real character and value of this writer, till it was enforced by the archdeacon of St. Albans.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XVII.

Of the Light in which the Dissenters are considered by the Archdeacon of St. Albans, and of the Penalties to which the Unitarians among them are subject.

REV. SIR,

THOUGH you profess yourself to be *no lover of damnatory clauses*, p. 165. and now and then are pleased to drop some obliging expressions of respect for dissenters, it is, however, with a considerable mixture of contempt, and with an intimation that we unitarian dissenters (and all unitarians, we both agree, either are, or ought to be dissenters in this country) are subject to many pains and penalties, as the laws now stand. With what view you threw out those hints, and so particularly recite those acts of parliament to the penalties of which we are obnoxious, is best known to yourself, and time will perhaps discover.

I had complained of the contempt with which you mentioned the places of worship among dissenters, when you called them *conventicles*. In your present publication, after something of an

N

apology

apology for using that word, which I think awkward enough, you do not perhaps much mend the matter, by saying, p. 167. “ I could have
 “ wished that the use of it had been considered
 “ as one of the mere archaisms of my style, in
 “ which nothing of insult was intended. I must,
 “ however, declare, that it would give me particular pleasure to receive conviction that Mr.
 “ Lindsey’s Meeting-house, and your own, are
 “ not more emphatically conventicles in your
 “ own sense, that is, in the worst sense of the
 “ word. From personal respect for you and him,
 “ I should be happy to be assured that you stand
 “ not within the danger of the 35th of Eliz. ch.
 “ i. or the 17th Ch. II. c. ii. to the penalties
 “ of which, and of other statutes, I must take
 “ the liberty to tell you, you are obnoxious, notwithstanding the late act of the 19th of his present Majesty in favour of dissenters, unless at
 “ the general or quarter sessions of the peace for
 “ the county where you live, you have made a
 “ certain declaration, which is required by that
 “ act, instead of the subscription to articles required by the former acts of toleration. I am
 “ sorry, Sir, to inform you, that I find no entry
 “ of Mr. Lindsey’s declaration in the office of
 “ the clerk of the peace, either for the county of
 “ Middlesex, or the city of Westminster. Could
 “ I make the same enquiry concerning you
 “ (which the distance of your residence prevents)
 “ I fear I should have the mortification to find
 “ that

“ that you have no more than your friend complied
 “ with the laws from which you claim protection.
 “ A report prevails that you both object to the de-
 “ claration from conscientious scruples, a very suffi-
 “ cient excuse for not making it : but no excuse at
 “ all for doing what the law allows not to be done,
 “ except upon the express condition that the decla-
 “ ration be previously made.”

You afterwards say, p. 169. “ your meeting-
 “ house and his, contrary to your imagination, are
 “ illegal, unknown to the laws, and unprotected by
 “ them.”

Here, Sir, it is you, and not we, who are mistaken. Both our *conventicles*, you will find, are protected, though we ourselves are not. The consequence, therefore, of any prosecution of me (if any person, taking the hint from you, should proceed to it) would be the depriving of the dissenters belonging to the New-Meeting at Birmingham of one of their present pastors ; but the *Meeting-house* would remain under the protection of the law, as much as any of your parish churches, which owe all their consideration to the same law ; and would not prevent their chusing another minister, who, if he had more caution than myself, might defy your malice ; but the congregation that I serve, would think themselves disgraced by a minister of that timid character.

As you were so very desirous of getting information concerning my conduct in this business, I wonder that you should not have been able to find some person in this neighbourhood like-minded with yourself, to make the enquiry for you. However, I will save you and your friends that trouble, and perhaps some small expence, by informing you, that, as I never made the *subscription* required of all dissenters before the late act, so neither have I made the *declaration* which that act makes necessary to my legal toleration, nor have I at present any intention to do it.

I shall farther inform you, and our readers, that when it was first proposed in *the general body of dissenting ministers in or near London* (of which, as I then resided pretty much in London, I was a member) whether we should desire our friends in parliament to promote the passing of the bill or not, I was one of those who voted for our continuing in our former situation; but we were over-ruled by a very great majority. The reason for my voting in this manner was, I believe, peculiar to myself. I observed, that I had not, on my own account, any objection to make the declaration proposed in that bill, with the exception of a single circumstance which I then mentioned, and which we all agreed had better be omitted, and which accordingly was struck out before the bill passed into a law. But I said that I perceived that many persons, for whom I had the greatest respect, had their serious scruples, and such

as it was probable they would not be able to overcome; and I thought that the passing of the law, and especially a general compliance with it, would make them more noticed, and perhaps bring them into trouble; whereas, the requisitions of the former law were so unreasonable, that though few, if any of us, had complied with them, it did not appear that any body would ever molest us on that account. For the same reason that I did not then wish for the law to pass, I do not now chuse unnecessarily to avail myself of it.

But with respect to myself, and many others, the thing is of little consequence. There are laws enow in this country from the penalties of which the late act would not exempt us. In this happy land of religious liberty and toleration, I am liable, at any time, and without any offence of a civil nature, to have all my goods confiscated, and to be imprisoned for life. But though I think these laws most absurd and unreasonable, and that, as a man who has not disturbed the peace of his neighbours, I am entitled to all the rights of other citizens; so that I neither ought to be molested on account of my own religion, nor compelled to contribute to the support of that of another person, any more than to pay his physician; I think myself happy, considering how much more unfriendly to truth civil governments and civil governors have been, that I am not exposed to all the difficulties and hazards that the apostles were exposed to; and when I cannot obtain

tain a legal *toleration*, I am very thankful for a *connivance*.

You say, p. 168, that "conscientious scruples" are no excuse at all for doing what the law "allows not to be done." In this you totally mistake the ground of my conduct. I do not pretend that it is authorized by the laws of this, or of any country. It is enough for me if I think myself justified by the *laws of God*; and whether I ought to *obey God, or man*, in this case, do you yourself judge.

What would you yourself advise us unitarians in this country to do? We have heard again and again all that you have to say in defence of your trinitarian notions, and trinitarian worship, without any approach towards conviction, and yet we think it our duty to make a public profession of our unitarian principles, and to adopt an unitarian form of worship. Would you seriously say we ought, with the views of things that we really have, to keep our opinions to ourselves, and have no public worship at all? And yet between this conduct and our acting more or less openly in opposition to you, and incurring the penalties of the laws now in force against us, there is no medium.

If you really be a friend to any thing that deserves the name of *toleration*, you must feel for the

the disgrace of your country, on account of the unjust and impolitic restraints the laws of it lay upon us, and you will use your endeavours to promote the repeal of *all penal laws in matters of religion*, and likewise to lay open all civil offices to all persons who are qualified to fill them; which indeed, is no more than is already done in several countries in Europe. That those who prefer the mode of religion now established, should bear the whole expence of it, without compelling us to assist them in it, while they do nothing for ours in return, though a thing perfectly reasonable, is more than I expect the archdeacon of St. Albans to countenance. I, however, live in the firm belief that even this will take place some time or other; and my belief is grounded on this general and glorious truth, that there is a wise and good being at the head of all affairs, bringing good out of all evil. I therefore believe that good will finally take place of all evil, and consequently, equity of injustice.

You Sir, as Archdeacon of St. Albans, may believe that the church of England will continue to the end of the world, and that *all nations* (at least all that speak the English language, and can read the book of Common Prayer in the original) *will flow into it*. On the other hand, it is my firm persuasion, that when *Babylon the great, the mother of harlots*, shall fall, all her daughters, all the *little Babylons*, all the *lesser establishments*, of what I deem

to be corrupt christianity, will fall with her, or soon after her; and therefore I apply to them, as well as to the church of Rome, that awful warning, Rev. xviii. 4. *Come out of her my people, that ye partake not of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

While we unitarians behave as good subjects (and I do not know that we are worse thought of than other dissenters in this respect) I have such confidence in the good sense of my countrymen, though without any particular obligation to yourself on this account, and in the spirit of the times (which throughout all Europe is daily more favourable to freedom of enquiry and toleration, and less favourable to old and corrupt, though venerable establishments) that I have little doubt but that I shall be suffered to proceed as I have hitherto done, unmolested, promoting by every means in my power, what I deem to be important *truth*, though our legislators in the last century voted it to be *heresy* and *blasphemy*. What our present legislative body, if the question was brought before them, would decree, is unknown; but I am pretty confident that when the subject shall come properly before them (and this may be pretty soon) they will be disposed to hear reason, and to do justice.

From what you say of your own freedom of enquiry, one would think that you might have treated us dissenters with a little more respect. For after observing that you are *much at home in the Greek language*,

language, and that you have read the ecclesiastical historians, you add, p. 163. "I had been many
 " years in the habits of thinking for myself upon a
 " variety of subjects, before I opened Dr. Clarke's
 " book. There is in most men a culpable timidity ;
 " you and I perhaps have overcome that general
 " infirmity, but there is in most men a culpable
 " timidity, which inclines them to be easily over-
 " awed by the authority of great names." It will
 make some persons smile to see you, Sir, group
 yourself with me upon this occasion, and they may
 ask for similar evidence of your having overcome
 this culpable timidity, and of your having really
 thought for yourself, when they see you professing
 to believe, and complying with every thing that
 those who do not think for themselves at all, profess
 to believe and comply with. Your profound ad-
 miration of Bishop Bull's writings is no proof of
 your thinking for yourself. All that can be inferred
 from it is, that you have made a wise choice of
 masters. The writer for whom I always profess the
 greatest admiration is Dr. Hartley, but I differ
 from him in many things, and things also of great
 consequence.

If however, you still retain the habit of thinking
 for yourself, allow me to return your civility to me,
 when you joined my name, p. 161. to those of
Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Gibbon, by adding yours
 also to this list of *free enquirers*, and your sentence
 will then close thus, *a Gibbon, a Priestley, or a*
Horstey.

For

For my own part, I cannot say that I much dislike my situation, in the light in which I view the different characters; since I find myself placed between an *unbeliever* on the one hand, and a *big churchman* on the other. *Medio tutissimus ibis.*

I am, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

Of the Charge of wilful Misrepresentation, &c.

REV. SIR,

AS both yourself, and your *great and good ally*, Mr. Badcock, have employed so much of your respective publications on the subject of *perversions, wilful misrepresentations, artifice, management, &c. &c. &c.* (for you are at no loss for words or phrases of this import) it may not be improper to give you one short letter on that subject.

I was willing to hope, that, in this second publication, you would have observed the rules of decency, and of probability, in your charges against me, and that you might have expressed some little concern for your former violations of them.

them. But I am sorry to find, that instead of retracting any thing, you have considerably added to your offences of this kind. You had before charged me with knowingly misquoting the English translation of the Bible, when, in fact, I should not have gained any thing by it. You now talk, p. 5. of my designedly omitting a significant adjective, as you say, in a quotation from Athanasius, when I neither intended to quote, nor to translate the passage, but only referred to, and gave the general sense of it; and this, I doubt not was the true one. Yet upon this you raise loud exclamations, concerning *truth, candour, consistency, and dealing in sarcasms.*

You also think, with Mr. Badcock, that I really meant to conceal from the unlearned part of a quotation from Justin Martyr, which I printed in Greek at full length, and this in a public controversy with yourself, of whose vigilance in this respect I could not entertain a doubt. "The entire passage," you say, p. 83. "as long as it appears not in your translation, lay innocently enough in the Greek, at the bottom of your page." But I must have been an *idiot* indeed in plain English, and something worse than the *idiota* of Tertullian, as well as the *homo nefarius* of Bishop Bull, to have attempted a deception in these circumstances.

As, in another place, you speak more fully on the subject of my artifice and insincerity,
enlarge

enlarge upon the nature of it, and the degree of its guilt in controversial writings, I shall produce the passage at length, and then give a general answer to it.

“ Indeed, Sir,” you say, p. 159. “ in quoting
“ ancient authors when you have understood the
“ original, which in many instances is not the
“ the case, you have too often been guilty of
“ much reserve and management. This ap-
“ pears in some instances, in which you cannot
“ pretend, that your own inadvertency, or your
“ printer’s, hath given occasion to unmerited im-
“ putations. I wish that my complaints upon this
“ head had been groundless : but in justice to my
“ own cause, I could not suffer unfair quotations
“ to pass undetected. God forbid that I should
“ draw any conclusion from this unseemly prac-
“ tice, against the general probity of your cha-
“ racter. But you will allow me to lament that
“ men of integrity, in the service of what they
“ think a good end, should indulge themselves
“ so freely as they often do in the use of unjusti-
“ fiable means. Time was, when the practice
“ was openly avowed, and Origen himself was
“ among its defenders. The art which he re-
“ commended, he scrupled not to employ. I
“ have produced an instance, in which, to silence
“ an adversary, he hath recourse to the wilful
“ and deliberate allegation of a notorious fal-
“ hood. You have gone no such length as this.
“ I think you may believe me sincere, when I
“ speak

“ speak respectfully of your worth and integrity,
 “ notwithstanding that I find occasion to charge
 “ you with some degree of blame, in a sort in
 “ which the great character of Origen was more
 “ deeply infected. Would to God it had been
 “ otherwise. Would to God I could with truth
 “ have boasted ‘ To these low arts stooped Origen,
 “ but my contemporary, my great antagonist, dis-
 “ dains them.’ How would it have heightened
 “ the pride of victory, could I have found a fair
 “ occasion to be thus the herald of my adversaries
 “ praise.”

All these, Sir, and such like charges of artful, and therefore highly criminal misrepresentation (for they cannot amount to any thing less, notwithstanding all your qualifying clauses) which you and Mr. Badcock are perpetually urging, are in their own nature, too absurd to gain any credit, and therefore can only shew that what you want in *argument*, you are willing to make up some other way. I have completely vindicated the character of Origen, which you have endeavoured to blot; and as to *myself*, you are quite at liberty to think of me just as you please. I am not conscious of any unfairness whatever in any part of my proceedings, but have a perfect willingness to bring before the public every thing that may enable them to form a true judgment on the subject of this controversy. If I knew of any circumstance favourable to your argument, I would produce it as readily as I should do any thing in favour of my own;

own; and I am as willing to detect my own mistakes, as you, or any person, can be to do it for me. For this I appeal to the tenor of all my writings, and to my general character, which I will venture to say is as fair as yours.

You are pleased, indeed, to balance the account of my wilful misrepresentations, &c. with an allowance for the *general probity of my character*, p. 160. and a *cordial esteem and affection for the virtues of it*, which, you say, *are great and amiable*. What you know of my private character I cannot tell; but I suppose not much; and I shall not attempt to balance your account in the same manner; for really of your private character, I know but little, either good or evil; and therefore I presume the former, though the liberties you have taken as a *writer* are not very favourable to that presumption. But this kind of apology is absurd; and had I thought you, or Mr. Badcock, capable of the things with which you charge me, I should not say that “your virtues were either great, or “amiable.”

By way of softening those charges, which materially affect my *moral character*, you sometimes (though it makes a poor compensation for defects of a moral nature) introduce compliments (whether sincerely or ironically is equally indifferent to me) respecting *merit of a philosophical kind*. These also, for want of information, I am unable to return. For if I were asked what improvements

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in science the world owes to you, I really could not tell; and I think it is very possible, that, in fact, you are as much a stranger to my pursuits, as I am to yours. By this I do not mean to insinuate that you have no merit as a *mathematician*, to which you make high pretensions; but though for some years I applied pretty closely to the study of pure mathematics, and was thought to have made some proficiency in them, it was when I had not the means of employing my time as I now do, so that I give but little attention to those matters. Whatever may be the case with you, I find that if I particularly cultivate one branch of knowledge, it must be at the expence of others. I have therefore made my choice of the different objects of pursuit, and shall hardly change it now, except, as I get older, to circumscribe my studies still more.

If any thing would justify a retort of such charges of unfairness, it would be your readiness, upon every slight occasion, to bring them against me. For we do not easily suspect others of what we feel we are incapable of ourselves. But as I am conscious of the utmost fairness in my own conduct, I cannot lightly believe the contrary of others.

As I observed to Mr. Venn, in the first theological controversy in which I engaged, p. 9. "It behoves us carefully to distinguish between a "*latent insincerity*" (the nature and causes of which I there explain) "under the influence of which
" men

“ men deceive themselves, and that *direct preva-*
 “ *rication*, with which those who are engaged in
 “ debate are too ready to charge one another, as
 “ if their adversaries knowingly concealed, or op-
 “ posed the truth. This is a crime of so heinous
 “ a nature, that I should be very unwilling to
 “ impute it to any person whatever.” I am
 therefore unwilling to charge it on you, or Mr.
 Badcock, notwithstanding some appearances might
 seem to justify me in it.

I am the most puzzled to account for the strange
 and improbable history that you, Sir, have given
 of a church of orthodox Jews at Jerusalem, after
 the time of Adrian, and the series of historical
facts, as you have the assurance to call them, for
 which it is not possible that you should have any
 authority, in ancient or even in modern writers ;
 and yet had you yourself been present at the sur-
 render of the place, and had drawn up the terms
 of capitulation, you could not have given a more
 distinct and positive account. But the fact, I be-
 lieve, was, that, without any examination of your
 own, you took it for granted, from the authority
 of Mosheim (who had no authority for it himself)
 that one leading circumstance was true, and then
 concluded that the other circumstances, which you
 have added, and therefore *knew* that you added,
 must have been so too. On this you have not hesi-
 tated to relate the whole in one continued *narra-*
tive, just as if you had been copying from some
 historian of the time ; and Origen, who lived in those
 times,

times, and in the very country, and whose veracity was never questioned before, is treated, without ceremony, as a *wilful liar*, because he has given a different account of things.

As it has been very much my object to trace *effects* to their *causes*, and I consider the human mind, and consequently all human actions, to be subject to *laws*, as regular as those which operate in my laboratory (for want of knowing or attending to which Mr. Gibbon has egregiously failed in his account of the causes of the spread of christianity, and you in this controversy) I had framed an hypothesis to account for Mr. Badcock's censure of what I said concerning Eusebius; but not being quite satisfied with it, I rejected it. However, notwithstanding strong appearances, I am still willing to hope, that the misrepresentation, though exceedingly gross, was not directly wilful.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XIX.

Miscellaneous articles, and the Conclusion.

REV. SIR,

DISPOSED as you are to make the most of every trifling oversight that you can discover in my *History*, and of every concession that I make to you, I still have no objection to acknowledge any *real mistake* that I have fallen into, important or unimportant; and I shall certainly correct all such in any future edition of my work; and likewise, as far as I am able, in the translations that are making of it into foreign languages. I shall now make *two* acknowledgments, and let our readers judge of their importance; and how little my *History* loses for want of being perfectly correct in those particulars.

I had said that “Valefius was of opinion that
 “the history of Hegesippus was neglected and
 “lost, because it was observed to favour the uni-
 “tarian doctrine,” whereas I should have said,
 “on account of the errors which it contained, and
 “that those errors could not be supposed to be any
 “other than those of the unitarians;” and if I had
 consulted the passage at the time, I certainly should
 have expressed myself in that more cautious manner.

But

But of what consequence is this circumstance to my great argument? Mr. Badcock, having looked for the passage to which I refer, and not being able to find it, seems to have imagined that I had no such passage to produce. He therefore after his insolent manner, challenges me to produce it, and to *put him to shame*. That I believe to be impossible, otherwise it would have been effectually done in my *Remarks on the Monthly Review*; at least, by my notice of his most shameful conduct with respect to my censure of Eusebius, p. 21, of which he says nothing at all in his *Letter to me*. I suppose he thought it *not to be regarded*. However the passage which I refer to, and which sufficiently answers my purpose, is as follows: “ Moreover, those books of Clement contained “ a short and compendious exposition of both “ the testaments, as Photius in his *Bibliotheca* “ witnesses; but on account of the errors with “ which they abounded, being negligently kept, “ they were at length lost; nor was there any “ other reason, in my opinion, why the books “ of Papias, Hegesippus, and others of the ancient “ are now lost *.”

You, Sir, however have observed this passage, and you say, p. 4. “ Valesius has indeed ex-

* Porro ii Clementis libri continebant brevem & compendiarium utriusque testamenti expositionem, ut testatur Photius in Bibliotheca. Ob errores autem quibus scatebant, negligentius habiti, tandem perierunt. Nec alia, meo quidem iudicio, causa est, cur Papiæ & Hegesippi, aliorumque veterum libri, interciderint. In Euseb. Hist. Lib. v, cap. 11.

“ pressed an opinion that the work of Hegesippus
 “ was neglected by the ancients, on account of
 “ errors which it contained. But what the errors
 “ might be which might occasion this neglect is
 “ a point upon which Valesius is silent. And
 “ what right have you to suppose that the unita-
 “ rian doctrine was the error which Valesius
 “ ascribed to Hegesippus more than to Clemens
 “ Alexandrinus, upon whose last work of the
 “ Hypotyposes he passes the same judgment.”

I answer, that there were no errors of any con-
 sequence ascribed to that early age besides those of
 the Gnostics, and of the unitarians. The former
 certainly were not those that Valesius could allude
 to with respect to Hegesippus, because this writer
 mentions the Gnostics very particularly as heretics,
 but makes no mention of unitarians at all ; though
 they certainly existed, and I doubt not constituted
 the great body of unlearned christians in his time ;
 which is one circumstance that, together with his
 being a *Jewish christian* (all of whom are expressly
 said to have been Ebionites, and none of them
 to have believed the divinity of Christ) leads
 me to conclude that he was an unitarian himself.
 Though Clemens Alexandrinus was not an unita-
 rian, yet he never calls unitarians *heretics* ; and
 since in his accounts of *heretics in general*, which
 are pretty frequent in his works, he evidently means
 the *Gnostics only*, and therefore virtually excludes
 unitarians from that description of men ; it is by no
 means improbable but that, in those writings of
 his

his which are lost, he might have said things directly in favour of unitarians.

In this passage Valesius also mentions the writings of Papias, as having, in his opinion, been lost for the same reason. Now Papias has certainly been supposed to be an Ebionite. Mr. Whiston has made this very probable from a variety of circumstances. See his *Account of the ceasing of miracles*, p. 18. In the same tract he gives his reasons for supposing Hegesippus to have been an Ebionite, and he expresses his wonder, “that he should have had the good fortune to be so long esteemed by the learned for a catholic,” p. 21, &c. In this Mr. Whiston may be supposed to have been sufficiently impartial, as he was an Arian, and expresses great dislike of the Ebionites; as, indeed, Arians always have done.

I also acknowledge that I ought not to have exempted Epiphanius (as you have observed, p. 4. though with more severity than the case required) from the impropriety of charging Noetus with being a Patripassian. But this also is a circumstance of as little consequence to the main argument as the former, though my negligence with respect to it, I frankly own, was greater. I had myself discovered the mistake, and should have corrected it, if your Letters to me had never appeared. That the Patripassian notion was injuriously charged upon the unitarians of antiquity is sufficiently shewn by Beaufobre, who was himself

self a trinitarian, and a man of learning if ever there was one. This charge was so common that, without any proper evidence whatever, all the unitarians are called Patripassians by one writer or other. Optatus even says that Ebion, the supposed father of the Ebionites, was a Patripassian*, though no early writer who mentions the Ebionites says any such thing of them.

I must, however, acknowledge that you have one just cause of triumph over me, and all the friends of free enquiry; but this also, as with respect to every other advantage which you have gained, you exult in too much, and make too great account of. The *Monthly Review*, which was formerly in our favour, is now completely yours. Your *Charge*, which contains the highest *orthodoxy*, and discovers the greatest spirit of *church authority* of any production in this age, has been examined before that tribunal, and been honoured with an unqualified approbation. And as to your present publication, which has no less merit of the same kind, its praises, I doubt not, are already *sung*, or at least *set to music*, and the whole choir of Reviewers, who have been unanimous in their condemnation of me, are ready to join the chorus on this occasion.

You plead your right, p. 78. to make the most of this your new acquisition; and in this you think

* Ut Hebion qui argumentabatur patrem passum esse, non filium. Lib. iv. p. 91.

yourself

yourself justified by my conduct in the publication of small and cheap pamphlets, for the purpose of disseminating my principles among the lower and poorer class of people, though, in my opinion, the two cases are very different indeed. This post, however, which we were once in possession of, you and your friends have now got, and it is not to be supposed that you will ask our leave what use to make of it; so that we must yield with as good a grace as we can, and endeavour to make our ground good elsewhere.

II.

One of your curious proofs of my *ignorance*, and of my being entirely unqualified to write the *history of early times*, is my not being acquainted with the opinions of some *modern writers*, and those either difficult to procure, or such as could have been of little use to me, if I had known them. I acknowledged that I had not heard of D. Zuicker, I did not know what Episcopius, Petavius, or Huetius, thought on a particular subject, and I had not read your great authority, bishop Bull. “What is this,” you say, p. 7. “but to confess that you are indeed little redde in the principal writers, either on your own side of the question or the opposite. But as no man, I presume, is born with an intuitive knowledge of the opinions, or the facts, of past ages, the historian of religious corruptions, confessing himself unredde in the *polemical divines*, confesses ignorance of his subject. You
O 4 “repel

“repel the imputation of *plagiarism* by the most
 “disgraceful confession of *ignorance*, to which foiled
 “polemic ever was reduced.”

Now the probability is, that my reading in polemical divinity is much more extensive than yours. But if it had been ten times greater than it is, I do not know whether, instead of being advantageous, it might not have been of disservice to me, in ascertaining the state of things in the early ages, to the knowledge of which these authors had no better access than myself. You yourself, I am pretty confident, have formed your opinions on these subjects chiefly from modern writers; and it has been by this means, and by the help of your fertile imagination, as I have shewn, that you have been so miserably misled as you have been.

III.

You and Mr. Badcock both pride yourselves in your knowledge of the Greek language, and you insult me, and my *Vindicator*, for our ignorance of it. But to criticize others is the easiest road to fame. In the same way you might set yourself up even against Casaubon, Scaliger, or Bently, to whom you acknowledge, p. 58. that you “stand bowing at a distance:” for the greatest scholars sometimes make great mistakes.

Out of the number of citations that I have made, is it extraordinary that two or three, and those

those of no great consequence, should have been found in some degree faulty? You and your ally have had no occasion to produce many, and writing in controversy, would naturally be more guarded; and yet your errors in this way far exceed mine. Concerning one of these, you say, p. 15. "the words are so very clear, that the sense was hardly to be missed at first sight, by a school boy in the second year of Greek." What, then, will be said of the man who can translate *idiota, videot*, who can argue from *οτι* as necessarily referring to *a person* (for if this was not your meaning, it was impertinent to alledge it at all) and censure me for rendering *εκ αλλω τι* by *to nothing but*? And what can you say in excuse for your learned ally translating *αλλοι γαρ κατ' αλλον τροπον*, *others upon another plan*, instead of *some in one way and others in another*, on which he founds the most improbable and malignant of all his accusations against me, for *concealment, wilful perversion, &c.*? And what can you say for the apology he has made for his blunder, when he only allows that *the words may be more accurately rendered* as I have done; whereas, every person who is at all acquainted with Greek, must know that, in that connexion, and especially if the force of the particle *γαρ* be attended to, the phrase will not bear any other rendering? A writer who assumes so much as he has done, and who has treated my *Vindicator*, on the subject of Greek, with a degree of insolence that exceeds any

any thing that I have met with, and yet has himself blundered in this manner, ought to *kiss the rod*, if not, without a figure, to *feel* it, and *take shame to himself*. His friends, however, if he have any, must blush for him.

Though from the age of seventeen to twenty-seven, I believe, I read as much Greek as almost any man can be supposed to have read in the same time, and after that taught it nine years, the last six of them at Warrington, and chiefly the higher Greek classics (for the elements of the language were not taught in that academy) I do not pretend ever to have been properly *at home* in the language. I mean so as to read it with the same ease, with which it is common to read Latin or French (indeed I have not yet met with any man who pretended that he could do this) and having given less attention to that language since I have had the means of employing my time better, your Scotch correspondent may be right in observing, p. 182, that *I am but very moderately skilled in it*, and at my time of life, my acquaintance with it is not likely to improve. However, such as it is, I shall make the best use that I can of it in the *larger work* on which I am now employed. It is possible, however, that I might make but a bad exchange of the remains of my Greek literature for yours, or that of your Scotch correspondent.

IV.

IV.

You are pleased to make some apology for your *haughty style*, and the contemptuous airs you gave yourself, both with respect to Dissenters, and to your own inferior Clergy. To what I observed on this subject, you now say, p. 158, “ it might
 “ be a sufficient, and not an unbecoming reply, to
 “ remind you that I spoke *ex cathedra*, and hold
 “ myself accountable for the advice which I gave
 “ to no human judicature, except the King, the
 “ metropolitan, and my diocesan. This would
 “ indeed, be the only answer, which I should
 “ condescend to give to any one for whom I re-
 “ tained not, under all our differences, a very
 “ considerable degree of personal esteem. But
 “ as Dr. Priestley is my adversary, in some points
 “ I could wish to set him right, and in some I
 “ desire to explain.”

A great part of this apology was, indeed, Sir, quite unnecessary, as no person can read your *Charge* and doubt your having delivered it *ex cathedra*. The inferior, the *far inferior* clergy, to whom it was addressed, were, I presume, fully sensible of it. The only question is, whether you ever think that you are not speaking *ex cathedra*. Please, however, to remember that I am not one of those to whom you have any right to speak in that manner, and that I do not hold myself accountable to any metropolitan, or diocesan, or even to the king, or any person or potentate on earth, in matters of religion. Also while
 I have

I have "credit enough (p. 171.) to collect," or to find, "a congregation," I shall preach, without applying to your church, or the church of Rome, for *boly orders*; and I shall think my *conventicle* as reputable a place for preaching as any of your *churches*; though you, p. 169. think it *arrogant* in me to make the comparison between them.

V.

I can hardly believe that I am living in the close of the eighteenth century, when I read what you say in this publication concerning the *dignity and the power of the priesthood*, derived by *regular succession*, p. 171. from the apostles, and of course through the Popes, and find that you seriously disallow of my authority to exercise the sacred function, &c. As a curiosity, in the year 1784, I am tempted to give my reader a pretty long extract from your work on this subject. After enumerating the mischiefs that you say, p. 170. you have seen in your own country, in the course of your own life, you add, "When I consider
 " that the root of all those evils has been the
 " prevalency of a principle, of which you seem
 " disposed to be an advocate, that every man
 " who has credit enough to collect a congregation
 " has a right, over which the magistrate cannot
 " without tyranny exercise controul, to celebrate
 " divine worship, according to his own form,
 " and to propagate his own opinions; I am inclined to be jealous of a principle which has
 " proved,

“ proved, I had almost said, so ruinous; and I
 “ lean the more to the opinion, that the com-
 “ mission of a ministry, perpetuated by regular
 “ succession, is something more than a dream of
 “ cloystered gownsmen, or a tale imposed upon
 “ the vulgar, to serve the ends of avarice and
 “ ambition. For whatever confusion human folly
 “ may admit, a divine institution must have within
 “ itself a provision for harmony and order. And,
 “ upon those principles, though I wish that all
 “ indulgence should be shewn to tender consciences,
 “ and will ever be an advocate for the largest to-
 “ leration that may be consistent with political
 “ wisdom (being indeed persuaded that the re-
 “ straints of human laws must be used with the
 “ greatest gentleness and moderation to be rendered
 “ means of strengthening the bonds of christian
 “ peace and amity) yet I could wish to plant a
 “ principle of severe restraint in the consciences of
 “ men. I could wish that the importance of the
 “ ministerial office were considered, that the prac-
 “ tice of antiquity were regarded, and that it might
 “ not seem a matter of perfect indifference to the
 “ laity, to what house of worship they resort. I
 “ cannot admit that every assembly of grave and
 “ virtuous men, in which grave and virtuous men
 “ take upon them to officiate, is to be dignified
 “ with the appellation of a *church*, &c.

That these doctrines, which will justify all the violence of the church of Rome, and which condemn the reformation, should be maintained by a protestant

divine at this day is rather extraordinary. I can almost fancy that the dial of Ahaz has once more gone back, and brought us to the time of Dr. Sacheverel, if not that of Archbishop Laud. But were I, in my turn, to make an enumeration of the complicated mischiefs that have arisen both to the cause of christianity, and the peace of society, from *church establishments* (but it would be digressing too far from the object of this controversy to do it) it would soon appear that it was high time that this boasted *alliance between the CHURCH and the STATE* was entirely broken; as it has proved infinitely injurious to both the contracting parties, though occasionally useful to those *churchmen* and *statesmen* who, to serve the purposes of their own ambition, had drawn the contract.

When I contemplate the dignity you assume as *Archdeacon*, and the high tone of your whole performance, superior to any thing *on my shelves*, I wonder that you should profess any respect for tender consciences at all. I find, however, that the respect you profess for dissenters, is only for those who are *favoured by the laws*; so that our obligations to you are not great; nor do you think there is any impropriety in the restraints of human laws in matters of religion, only you would have them used, p. 171. *with gentleness and moderation*. How far this gentleness and moderation would go, if you really thought the church in danger, I cannot tell. I am, therefore, happy that you are so easy on that account, as you represent yourself, p. 8.

You

You are pleased, however, though in no perfect consistence with what you say of the *powers of the priesthood*, as derived by succession from the apostles, to say, p. 161. "You will remember that I make " the learning and the piety of her clergy, of which " ample monuments are extant, the basis of her " pre-eminence." I have no disposition to detract from the learning or the piety there may be among you; but as you celebrate your own praises, I will take the liberty to observe, that, allowance being made for your superior numbers, and superior advantages, with respect to conveniences for study, from which, by a policy as weak as it is illiberal, you exclude dissenters (thinking, perhaps, to make us despicable, by keeping us in ignorance) I do not think that the body of dissenting ministers, with all their disadvantages, need be afraid of a comparison with you; and candid persons among the clergy have acknowledged the benefit you have derived from us; not to say that you are indebted to us for some of your greatest ornaments, as Tillotson, Butler, and Secker.

In what you say of Dr. Chandler (whose infirmity, and I may add, whose misfortune, it was to pay too much court to leading men, both in the church and in the state) viz. that he preferred the church of England to any other establishment of christianity, p. 161. it would be no great compliment from me, if I should say it after him. But I really cannot do it; and if I could adopt
 3 your

your idea of the transmission of the powers of the priesthood from the apostles, and was to conform to any establishment, I should chuse to be member of a much older and more venerable establishment than yours, and in which the claim to that valuable succession should be less liable to litigation.

As to yourself in particular, who are so proud of being a *churchman*, it would have been happy for the public, and likewise a particular satisfaction to myself, if you had had a greater share of that *learning* of which you think your church possessed. More information would then have been given to our readers by both of us; and at least I might have been able to say, with the person who examined Dr. Clarke, *Probe me exercuisti*. All I can now say is, that I have made some use of your *ignorance*, though I should have made more of your *knowledge*, to throw light on the subject of our discussion. My task has been much too easy; but I would willingly have done more, if there had been any occasion for it, or indeed a propriety in it.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

BIRMINGHAM,

September, 1784.

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

The first of the following paragraphs, which was to have been the last of Letter VIII. p. 79, having been overlooked at the time of printing, I have thought proper to give it in this place, and to add to it all that follows.

ADMITTING that the apostles had taught any doctrines of a peculiarly sublime nature, and above the comprehension of ordinary Christians; yet, as all their teaching was in public, and there were no *secrets* among them, nothing corresponding to the *mysteries* of the heathens, the common people must have heard of these sublime things, and have been accustomed to the sound of the language in which they were expressed; and they would have learned to respect what they could not understand. They could never have been *offended*, and *staggered* at things which they, and their fathers before them, had always been in the hearing of.

Besides, this argument for the novelty of the doctrine of the trinity from the *offence* that was
P given

given by it, in the time of Tertullian, when, as far as I can find, the common people first heard of it; that this class of persons were generally unitarians before, and even after, the council of Nice, appears pretty clearly from several circumstances in the history of those times. Besides, that we do not read of any of the *laity* being excommunicated along with Noetus, Paul of Samosata, or Photinus (though unitarians are acknowledged to have been in great numbers in their days, and to have been in communion with the catholic church) when the two last were deposed from their sees, the common people were their friends. After the bishops had deposed Paul of Samosata, he could not be expelled from the episcopal house till the aid of the emperor Aurelian was called in, and he may be supposed to have been offended at him, for his having been in the interest of his rival Zenobia. This could not have been necessary, if the majority of his people had not been with him, and therefore, if his deposition had not, in fact, been unjust:

As to Photinus, he was so popular in his diocese, that his solemn deposition by three councils could not remove him from his see. "He defended himself," says Tillemont (*History of the Arians*, Vol. I. p. 116) "against the authority of the church, by the affection which
"his

" his people had for him, even to the year 351 ;
 " though his heresy began to appear as early as
 " 342, or 343, according to Socrates, and the
 " Eusebians condemned it in one of their con-
 " fessions of faith, in 345." At length the em-
 peror Constantius, a zealous Arian, thought it ne-
 cessary to interfere, and get him banished in a
 council held at Sirmium itself. I may add, that
 Marcellus of Ancyra left Galatia full of uni-
 tarians, as Basil afterwards found to his cost.
 Had the body of christians in those times been
 generally trinitarians, we dissenters, who are
 pretty much in the same situation with unita-
 rians in those times, not having the countenance
 of government, know well how ready the com-
 mon people would have been to take an active
 part in those affairs.

" Sabellianism," which was precisely the same
 thing with unitarianism in former times, Dr. Lard-
 ner says (Credibility, Vol. IV. p. 606) " must
 " have been very agreeable to the apprehensions
 " of many people. Eusebius speaks of its in-
 " creasing very much in Egypt, when Dionysius
 " of Alexandria opposed it. According to Atha-
 " nsius, the occasion of Dionysius writing
 " upon that head, was, that *some of the bishops*
 " *of Africa followed the doctrine of Sabellius, and*
 " *they prevailed to such a degree, that the Son of*
 " *God was scarce any longer preached in the churches.*"

It is also remarkable that the first treatise that was ever written against the unitarian doctrine was that of Tertullian against Praxeas, with whom he was particularly provoked, on account of the active part he had taken against Montanus, in getting him excommunicated and expelled from the church of Rome. This, says Le Sueur, was the cause of the bitterness with which Tertullian wrote against him.—Now there were treatises against the Gnostics in a much earlier period. Why then were none written against the unitarians, since pure unitarianism was certainly as old as Gnosticism; and if it had been deemed a *heresy* at all, it would certainly have been thought to be of the most alarming nature, as it is considered at present? In the opinions of those who are now called *orthodox*, the Gnostics thought much more honourably of Christ than the unitarians did. The unitarians were likewise much more numerous, and in the bosom of the church itself, a circumstance which might be expected to render them peculiarly obnoxious.

CATALOGUE

No. II.

I Shall extend this *Appendix*, in order to observe that, to the many false charges and insinuations of Dr. Horsley, which are noticed in the preceding Letters, he has added another to exculpate himself for the contempt which he had expressed of dissenters. “If you are still,” he says, p. 172. “disposed to be indignant about “this harmless word” (conventicle) “recollect, I beseech you, with what respect you “have yourself treated the venerable body to “which I belong, the clergy of the establishment. You divide it into two classes only, “the *ignorant* and the *insincere*. Have I no share “in this opprobrium of my order? Have I no “right to be indignant in my turn?”

I do not pretend to recollect all that I have written, but I have such a consciousness of never having *meant*, or *intended to say*, what Dr. Horsley here charges me with, that I will venture to assert, that he cannot have any more authority for this, than for the privileges granted to the Jewish christians of Jerusalem on their abandoning the ceremonies of their old religion. That many of the clergy are *ignorant*, none can deny; because it is true of every body of clergy in the

Q

world;

world; and that some are *insincere*, may also without great uncharitableness, be supposed of any large body of men. Of one kind of insincerity the fact is too evident to be denied of several of the members of the church of England. For no man can be sincere in professing to believe what he openly writes against. And are there not persons in communion with the church of England, who publicly controvert the articles of it; which articles, while they continue in the church, and especially if they officiate in it, they virtually profess to believe. That many are both learned and sincere, I have acknowledged with respect to the clergy of the church of Rome, and I think I could hardly say less of those of the church of England. I shall, therefore, consider this charge of Dr. Horsley, as a mere *calumny*, till he shall produce some evidence for it; and if, in any of my writings, he can find sufficient authority for his accusation, I here retract what I advanced, and ask pardon for it.

The *learning* of many divines in the church of Rome, and that of England, I have never denied. Bishop Hurd I have stiled *learned* and *able*, though, in my opinion, nothing can be weaker than his reasoning on the subject of church establishments. As to *sincerity*, I have always been ready to acknowledge it, with respect to both the churches. As one proof of this, I shall quote a passage from the *Sermon* I preached on *accepting the pastoral office* in this place, p. 30.

“ Think not that the most fervent zeal for what
“ are apprehended to be the genuine doctrines of
“ the gospel is at all inconsistent with true *chris-*
“ *tian charity*, which always judges of particular
“ persons according to the advantages they have
“ enjoyed, and of the final state of men by their
“ *sincerity* only. And for my own part, I have
“ no doubt, but that, though the church of
“ Rome be the proper *Antichrist* of the apostles,
“ not only innumerable zealous papists, but
“ even some popes themselves, and since the re-
“ formation, will sit down with Luther, with Cal-
“ vin, and with Socinus, in the kingdom of our
“ Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Known unto
“ God alone are the hearts of men; and the
“ man who honestly pursues truth, and who
“ acts according to the best lights that God
“ gives him an opportunity of acquiring, will be
“ he whom the *God of truth* and uprightness will
“ approve; and none will suffer a greater or
“ more just condemnation than those who *bold*
“ *the truth in unrighteousness*. Much rather would
“ I be in the case of many worthy persons in the
“ church of England, or the church of Rome,
“ who at the same time that they are fully sen-
“ sible of the corruptions and errors of the system
“ in which they are entangled, are not able to
“ break their chains, than, from a spirit the re-
“ verse of that of the gospel, make an improper
“ use of my own liberty by insulting them.”

Will

Will Dr. Horsley himself say this after me? With respect to real candour, few, I think, will go greater lengths than I have done. He charges me with many instances of *wilful misrepresentation*, which is certainly a charge of *insincerity*; whereas I have not charged him with any, though I might have done it with much greater appearance of reason. With respect to *ignorance*, viz. of what relates to the subject of this controversy, with which he likewise repeatedly charges me, I own that I return the accusation, and let our readers judge between us.

A CATALOGUE

No. III.

HAVING shewn these *Letters* to some of my friends, and been favoured with their remarks, I wish to add the following explanations.

I. P. 30. A passage has been pointed out to me in Grotius (*Opera*, vol. II. p. 5.) in which he speaks of the Nazarenes as. “holding the common faith of other christians with respect to Christ, “which the Ebionites did not.” But as the opinion of the Ebionites, of which he is there speaking, was that Christ was the son of Joseph, all that can be inferred from the passage, is that, in his opinion, the Nazarenes differed from the Ebionites by believing the doctrine of the miraculous conception. By the *common faith of christians*, in that early age (supposing him to have had a view to the doctrine concerning Christ, more extensively considered) Grotius, no doubt, meant his own opinion, which was far from that *high orthodoxy*, which Dr. Horsley ascribes to the Nazarenes.

Grotius also says that “it is well observed “by Sulpitius Severus, that all the Jewish christians till the time of Adrian, held that Christ “was God, though they observed the law of “Moses,” in the passage which I have quoted

R

from

from him, p. 41. But the sense in which Grotius understood the term *God* in this place, must be explained by his own sentiments concerning Christ. As to Sulpitius himself, he must be considered as having said nothing more than that "almost all the Jews at Jerusalem were christians, though they observed the law of Moses." This writer's mere assertion that the Jewish christians held Christ to be God, in the proper sense of the word, unsupported by any reasons for it, is even less to be regarded than that of Eusebius.

II. The latter part of the quotation from Chrysostom, p. 93. will admit of a translation more favourable to my purpose, by introducing a parenthesis, and a note of interrogation, as follows: "How could men who were then first taken from their altars, idols, &c. (for such was the worship of the heathens) and being then first brought off from these abominations, readily receive sublime doctrines?"

A CATALOGUE

A
CATALOGUE OF BOOKS

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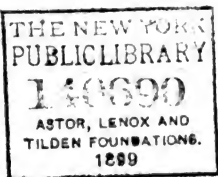
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T H E
C O N T E N T S.

<i>A</i> <i>N</i> introductory Letter - - -	Page 1
---	-----------

L E T T E R I.

<i>Of the veracity of Origen</i> - -	3
--------------------------------------	---

L E T T E R II.

<i>General Observations relating to the sup- posed orthodox church of Jewish chris- tians at Jerusalem, after the time of Adrian</i> - - - -	15
--	----

L E T T E R III.

<i>Of the testimony of Epiphanius to the exist- ence of a church of Orthodox Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, after the time of Adrian</i> - - - -	21
---	----

A 2 L E T T E R

C O N T E N T S.

L E T T E R IV.

<i>Of the Evidence from Jerom in favour of the existence of a church of Orthodox Jewish Christians at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian</i>	- - - -	25
--	---------------	----

L E T T E R V.

<i>Of the Miraculous Conception</i>	- -	35
-------------------------------------	-------	----

L E T T E R VI.

<i>Miscellaneous articles</i>	- - -	39
-------------------------------	-----------	----

<i>Remarks on Mr. Howes's ninth Number of Observations on Books ancient and modern</i>		56
--	--	----

T H E

T H E

P R E F A C E.

W H E N, in the advertisement of my *History of early Opinions concerning Christ*, I pledged myself to shew, that *Dr. Horsley's Remarks* on my Letters to him were "as defective in argument, as they are in temper," I did not mean that I would animadvert upon them *immediately*, or very soon; but intended to wait till I should hear what would be objected to that larger work, and then reply to him and others at the same time. I found, however, that the advertisement had raised a general expectation of a *speedy* reply to Dr. Horsley in particular; and being unwilling to disappoint any expectations I had even unintentionally excited, and more unwilling to appear desirous of shrinking from this discussion, I have done at present
what

what many of my friends will probably think might as well have been deferred a while longer.

Besides, as Dr. Horsley's Remarks were written before he had seen my large History, I thought it might not be amiss, in this manner, to close *the first act in our drama*; the *second* being reserved for what may be occasioned by that work, which will probably be much more considerable than any thing that has been produced by the *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. And my design (after the termination of the present discussion with Dr. Horsley, which must soon come to an issue) is to wait a year or two, till I see what the publication of my large work on this subject shall produce, and then to reply to all my opponents at once; frankly acknowledging any mistakes I shall appear to have fallen into, and vindicating whatever I shall think capable of it, and deserving it.

Agreeably

Agreeably to this scheme, I have annexed to these *Letters* some *Remarks on the ninth number of Mr. Howes's Observations on books ancient and modern*, in which he has begun his attack upon me. But in this I have been very concise, expecting to have an opportunity of treating the subjects more largely when I consider what he has farther to produce. Mr. White also cannot decline the discussion, and I have heard of the threats of others. We may, consequently, hope that this controversy (to which I find that much attention is given in foreign countries) will soon come to a proper termination, so that learned men in all nations will not long remain in uncertainty with respect to any thing of importance relating to it.

As this is a controversy that will probably have lasting consequences, let all who engage in it, on either side, be careful to acquit themselves in proportion to the character which they apprehend they have at stake; but above all, let *truth* be our great object.

object. Our readers will easily perceive whether it be so or not. We shall sooner deceive ourselves than them. And least of all can we impose upon that great being who is *the God of truth*, who secretly guides all our pursuits, and whose excellent purposes will be answered by them, with whatever views we may engage in them.

N. B. Though an account of *the State of Calvinism among the Dissenters*, on which Dr. Horsley enlarges so much, has but little to do with the object of our controversy, I should have said something more on this subject, but that I hear it will be considered by a person who is exceedingly well qualified to inform the public concerning it, and to explain the cause of Dr. Horsley's very gross and palpable mistake.

E R R A T A.

N. B. (*b*) signifies from the bottom of the page.

Page 26, line 2, (*b*) for 14, read 1.

— line 1, (*b*) for 6, read 16.

— 28, line 11, *note*, for *regii*, read *regio*.

L E T T E R S
TO THE
ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBANS.

A N
INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

REV. SIR;

IN the course of our controversy, you maintained that there was *a church of trinitarian Jewish christians at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian*; and as the account that Origen gives of the state of things in his time does not admit of the existence of such a church, you scrupled not to say, that “he had recourse to the wilful and deliberate allegation of a notorious falsehood.” This you did on so little foundation, that I charged you with being *a falsifier of history, and a defamer of the character of the dead.*

On this article you have thought proper (notwithstanding your previously-declared resolution to the contrary) to make your defence, in which you

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pro-

produce five passages from ancient writers, two from Origen himself, two from Jerom, and one from Euphrianius. In these *Letters* I undertake to show that, though you have taken eighteen months to write, and to revise your *Remarks* you have grossly misunderstood, or misapplied, all the passages, so that not one of them is to your purpose, and my charge still remains in its full force. For the justness of *my* interpretation of the passages in question, I appeal to all who have any pretensions to scholarship, in this or any other country, and in this public manner I call upon you to vindicate *your own*.

On this article, at least, an article deliberately selected by yourself, let the controversy between us come to a fair issue. Nothing has been, or shall be wanting to it on my part; and therefore the Public will certainly expect your explicit and speedy answer.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Birmingham, June 1, 1786.

LETTER

L E T T E R I.

Of the Veracity of Origen.

REV. SIR,

AFTER having indulged your indolence, as you say, p. 1, eighteen months, I am happy to find, that, notwithstanding your opinion, *ib.* of my *manifest insufficiency* as your antagonist (which you observe, p. 2, “left you at liberty to indulge yourself without seeming to desert your cause”) there was something in my *Letters* to you that has at length roused you to make a reply. To me this is a very high gratification. For my predominant disposition not being indolence, I rejoice in any circumstance that contributes to keep the subject of our controversy in view; being confident that nothing but a continued attention to it is requisite to a speedy decision in favour of the cause that I have espoused, which I cannot help considering as of the greatest importance to the cause of christianity itself.

I should have been more pleased if you had pursued the discussion of every article in debate between us; but as you have thought proper to confine yourself chiefly to what relates to the orthodoxy of the primitive Jewish church, I must do the same, first considering what you have advanced in order to impeach the veracity of Origen, and then the testimonies of Epiphanius and Jerom, as evi-

B 2

dences

dences of the existence of a whole church of orthodox Jews at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian.

“ In the second book against Celsus” (to use your own words, p. 22.) “ near the beginning of the book, “ Origen asserts, of the Hebrew christians of his own times, without exception, that they had not abandoned the laws and customs of their ancestors, and that for that reason they were called “ *Ebionites*.” This is also the appellation that he gives to all the Jewish christians, of whom he makes two classes, one of them believing the miraculous conception of Jesus, and the other denying it; but neither of them admitting his divinity.

This testimony of such a person as Origen to the unitarianism of all the Jewish christians *in his time*, goes so near to prove the unitarianism of the great body of Jewish christians, and consequently of the christian church in general, *in the time of the apostles*, that I do not wonder at your wishing to set it aside; and it is so full and express, that you have no other way of doing it, than by maintaining that this most respectable man knowingly asserted an untruth. You even add, p. 28. 30. that you would not take his evidence upon oath. Indeed, this writer was so circumstanced, in consequence of living so near Judea, and sometimes in it, that he could not but have known whether there was any considerable body of Jewish christians who believed the doctrine of the trinity, and who had abandoned

the customs of their ancestors, or not; so that if what he asserted be an untruth, it *must* have been a wilful one, and (as serving the purpose of his argument) a *deliberate* one.

There are, however, some circumstances attending this charge of a wilful falsehood against Origen, that I should have thought might have made you pause before you had advanced it so confidently as you have done.

The general character of Origen makes the supposition highly improbable. For he was a man not more distinguished by his genius and learning (in which he had confessedly no superior in the age in which he lived) than he was by his integrity, and his firmness in the cause of christian truth; and when, in a subsequent age, his opinions were deemed to be heretical, his greatest enemies left his moral character unimpeached. In such esteem was he universally held, that, as Eusebius informs us, it was generally said of him, "As was his speech, such was his conduct; and as was his conduct, such was his speech*:" his eloquence and the virtues of his life corresponding to each other. And yet this is the man whose evidence, because it makes against yourself, you declare that you would not admit upon oath.

* Οιον γὰρ τον λογον τοιονδε φασι τον τροπον· ὅς οιον τον τροπον τοιονδε ὃ τον λογον επεδεικνυτο. Euseb. Hist. L. vi. cap. 3. p. 261.

Had the testimony of Origen to the unitarianism of the great body of Jewish christians not been well founded, it was greatly the purpose of many of the early writers (and particularly of Eusebius, who maintained the novelty of the unitarian doctrine) to have refuted it. But neither Eusebius, nor any other ancient writer, the most zealous for orthodoxy, and the most hostile to Origen on other accounts, has attempted it. Might it not have been expected of Eusebius in particular, that after he had copied Origen's account of the Ebionites, by dividing them into two classes, just as he had done (viz. some of them believing the miraculous conception, and others not) he would have added that, notwithstanding what Origen had said to the contrary, many of them had abandoned the law of Moses, and were believers in the divinity of Christ? But he has not done any such thing. He therefore must have known that he could not do it, and he was not disposed to tell a wilful lie in the case. Indeed, I am willing to think, that few persons are so abandoned as to be capable of doing this.

With respect to this particular assertion concerning the state of the Jewish christians in the time of Origen, it is so circumstanced, that if he had even been *capable* of asserting a falsehood, *this* was the last that he would have had recourse to; because he was writing in a public controversy, in which he has insisted largely on this particular article, and insulted his adversary for his ignorance of a notorious fact. In this situation, he must have been nothing less

less than infatuated, to have advanced what all his readers must have known to be false. A falsehood so circumstanced, and which must have been a wilful one, would have been so evidently ruinous to his credit, and so fatal to his cause, that he must have been a fool not to have seen it.

Besides, this particular circumstance, of the christian Jews not abandoning the customs of their ancestors, was not of so much consequence to his general argument in defence of christianity, but that he might very well have neglected it. Nothing, therefore, but a perfect confidence that what he did advance was true, could have led him to make any declaration on the subject.

What is more extraordinary still, you say, p. 25, “ he himself contradicted his own assertion, at no greater distance than the third section of the same book; where the good Father,” as you ironically call him, “ takes quite another ground to confute his adversary.” Certainly this must be thought to be *a priori*, in the highest degree improbable.

I shall now consider this flagrant contradiction, by which this great man (for so all the world has ever called him) is supposed to confute himself, and so far to have lost all character, that the Archdeacon of St. Alban’s would not take his evidence upon oath; and I shall recite it in your own words.

‘ At no greater distance than in the third section
‘ of the same book, the good Father takes quite an-

‘ other ground to confute his adversary ; he insults
 ‘ over his ignorance for not making the distinctions
 ‘ which he himself, in the allegation in question,
 ‘ had confounded.’ “ It is my present point, says
 “ Origen, to evince Celsus’s ignorance, who has
 “ made a Jew say to his countrymen, to Israelites
 “ believing in Christ, Upon what motive have you
 “ deserted the law of your ancestors : But how have
 “ they deserted the law of their ancestors, who re-
 “ prove those who are inattentive to it, and say Tell
 “ me ye, &c ?” ‘ Then after a citation of certain
 ‘ texts from St. Paul’s epistles, in which the apostle
 ‘ avails himself of the authority of the law to enforce
 ‘ particular duties, which texts make nothing either
 • ‘ for or against the Jew’s assertion, that the christians
 ‘ of the circumcision had abandoned their ancient
 ‘ laws, but prove only that the disuse of the law, if
 ‘ it was actually gone into disuse, could not be
 ‘ deemed a desertion, because it proceeded not
 ‘ from any disregard to the authority of the law-
 ‘ giver. After a citation of texts to this purpose,
 ‘ Origen proceeds in this remarkable strain.’ “ And
 “ how confusedly does Celsus’s Jew speak upon this
 “ subject, when he might have said *more plausibly*,
 “ Some of you have relinquished the old customs
 “ upon pretence of expositions and allegories.
 “ Some again expounding, as you call it, spiritually,
 “ nevertheless, observe the institutions of our ances-
 “ tors. But some, not admitting these expo-
 “ sitions, are willing to receive Jesus as the person
 “ foretold by the prophets, and to observe the law
 “ of Moses, according to the ancient customs, as
 “ having

“ having in the letter the whole meaning of the
 “ spirit *.” ‘ In these words Origen confesses all
 ‘ that I have alleged of him. He confesses, in
 ‘ contradiction to his former assertion, that he
 ‘ knew of three sorts of Jews professing christianity ;
 ‘ one sort adhered to the letter of the Mosaic law,
 ‘ rejecting all figurative interpretations : another
 ‘ sort admitted a figurative interpretation, conform-
 ‘ ing, however, to the letter of the precept, but a
 ‘ third sort (the first in Origen’s enumeration) had
 ‘ relinquished the observance of the literal precept,
 ‘ conceiving it to be of no importance in comparison
 ‘ of the latent figurative meaning.’

This contains the whole of your curious reason-
 ing, in which you suppose that Origen, in treating
 of the same subject, and in continuation of the same
 argument, has given you this pretence for impeach-
 ing his veracity as you have done. But surely this
 writer, who must have known his own meaning,
 could not have imagined that he had really contra-
 dicted himself in two passages, not in different
 works, written at different times, or in distant parts
 of the same work (in which he might have forgotten

* Και ως συγληχμενως γε ταυθ' ο παρα τω Κελσω Ιουδαιου λεγει,
 δυναμενος πιθανωτερον ειπειν, οτι τινες μεν ημων καλαλεονιπασι τα εδη
 προφασει διηγησεων και αλληγοριων· τινες δε και διηγμενοι, ως
 επαγγελεσθε, πνευμαλικως, εδεν ητιον τα πατρια τηρειτε· τινες δε, εδε
 διηγμενοι, βηλεσθε τον Ιησυν παραδεξασθαι ως προφητευεν Ια, και τον
 Μωυσεως νομον τηρησαι, καλα τα πατρια· ως εν τη λεξει εχοντες τον
 πατρι τς πνευματικον. Lib. ii. p. 59.

what

what he had said in one of the passages, when he was writing the other) but in the same work, the same part of the work, and in paragraphs so very near to each other. And I believe nobody before yourself, ever imagined that there was any contradiction in them at all.

In the former he asserts, in general terms, without making any particular exception, that the Jewish christians adhered to the customs of their ancestors, and in the latter, which almost immediately follows it, he says that his adversary, who had asserted the contrary, would have said what was more *plausible* (not what was *true*) if he had said that some of them had relinquished their ancient customs, while the rest adhered to them; alluding, perhaps, to a few who had abandoned those customs, while the great body of them had not, which is sufficiently consistent with what he had said before. For inconsiderable exceptions are not regarded in general assertions. It would have been very extraordinary indeed, if *no* Jewish christians whatever had abandoned the rites of their former religion, when, in all ages, some Jews, whether they became christians or not, have done so. In like manner, it concerns me not to assert that no individuals of the Jewish christians embraced the doctrine of the trinity, because my purpose is sufficiently answered if *the great body of them*, to whom the rest bore no sensible proportion, were unitarians. And though there might be a few Jewish christians who had deserted their former customs, which would have given Celsus a *plausible pretence*

pretence for making such a division of them as to make these one of the classes, yet the great body of them had not; and this was sufficient to remove the reproach which Celsus had thrown out against the Jewish christians in general.

That this was really the case, and that the great body of Jewish christians were likewise unitarians, we have the express testimony of Origen, uncontradicted, as I have shewn, by himself, or any other authority whatever. He could not but be well informed with respect to the fact, his veracity was never impeached; and if he had been disposed to deny the truth (which he had no temptation to do) he wrote in circumstances in which his attempts to falsify could not have availed him.

But to prove Origen to be guilty of contradicting himself is not the only use you make of the passage. You say, p. 27, "But this is not all. In the next sentence he gives us to understand, though I confess more indirectly, but he gives us to understand, that of these three sorts of Hebrews professing christianity, they only who had laid aside the use of the Mosaic law, were in his time considered as true christians." This is extraordinary indeed; but let us see *how* it is *given to be understood*. Having found so little in your clear *conclusions*, I do not expect much from your supposed *insinuations*.

' For

‘ For he mentions it as a further proof of the
 ‘ ignorance of Celsus, pretending, as it appears he
 ‘ did, to deep erudition upon all subjects, that, in
 ‘ his account of the heresies of the christian church,
 ‘ he had omitted the Israelites believing in Jesus,
 ‘ and not laying aside the law of their ancestors.
 “ But how should Celsus,” he says, “ make clear
 “ distinctions upon this point, who, in the sequel
 “ of his work, mentions impious heresies, alto-
 “ gether alienated from Christ, and others which
 “ have renounced the creator, and has not noticed
 “ [or knew not of] Israelites believing in Jesus,
 “ and not relinquishing the law of their fathers*.”
 ‘ What opinion,’ you say, ‘ is to be entertained of a
 ‘ writer’s veracity, who in one page asserts that the
 ‘ Hebrews professing christianity had not renounced
 ‘ the Jewish law, and in the next affirms that a part
 ‘ of them had renounced it, not without an insinua-
 ‘ tion that they who had not were heretics, not true
 ‘ christians. EGO HUIC TESTI, ETIAM JURATO,
 ‘ QUI TAM MANIFESTO FUMOS VENDIT, ME NON
 ‘ CREDITURUM ESSE CONFIRMO.’

* Αλλα γαρ ποθεν Κελσω τα κα̑ια τον τοπον τρανωσαι, ος κ̑
 αιρεσεων μεν αδεων, κ̑ τς̑ Ιησ̑υ παντη αλλο̑ιων εν τοις ε̑ξ̑ης εμνημο-
 νευσε, κ̑ αλλων κα̑ιαλειπ̑ων τον δημ̑ιργον· εκ̑ ο̑ιδε δε κ̑ Ισραηλ̑ιτας εις
 Ιησ̑ον πιστευ̑οντας, κ̑ κ̑ κα̑ιαλειπ̑οντας τον πα̑τριον νομον; κ̑ γαρ προ̑εκει̑
 αυτω φιλαλη̑ως ολα τα κα̑ια τον τοπον εξ̑ετασαι, ιν̑ ει τι χρη̑σιμον
 ευρισκοι παρα̑δε̑ξ̑ηται, αλλα κ̑ ως̑ εχ̑θρος, κ̑ ολος τς̑ ανα̑τρεπειν αμα̑
 τω̑ ακ̑ησαι γενομε̑ν, τα̑ τοια̑ντα̑ ανε̑γρα̑φεν. Lib. ii. p. 59.

Such

Such is the curious inference of the learned Archdeacon of St. Albans. From this construction of the passage, a person might be led to think that Origen represented Celsus as having undertaken to give an account of the heresies in the christian church, and as having, in that account, omitted *the Israelites believing in Jesus, and not laying aside the rites of their ancestors*; and on no other ground can your insinuation stand. Whereas the most natural construction of the passage is, that Origen says, "It is no wonder that Celsus should be so ignorant of what he was treating, when he classed the Gnostics along with christians, and did not even know that there were Israelites who professed christianity, and adhered to the laws of Moses." Where then is the most distant insinuation that the *Israelites believing in Christ, and not laying aside the rites of their ancestors*, were heretics? That the Gnostics were classed with christians, was a common complaint of the orthodox in that age.

You strangely allege another instance of what you call *prevarication* in Origen, in the same book against Celsus. In the controversy with the Jews, about the meaning of the word *עלמה*, which he contends signifies *a virgin*, he says (Remarks, p. 29) "The word *עלמה*, which the LXX have translated into the word *παρθενή* [a virgin] but other interpreters into the word *νεανίς* [a young woman]"

"woman] is put too, AS THEY SAY, in Deuteronomy, for a virgin*."

On this you remark as follows, "What is this *as they say*? Was it unknown to the compiler of the Hexapla, what the reading of the Hebrew text, in his own time, was? If he knew that it was what he would have it thought to be, why does he seem to assert upon hearsay only? If he knew not, why did he not inform himself, that he might either assert with confidence what he had found upon enquiry to be true, or not assert what could not be maintained? EGO HUIC TESTI, ETIAMSI JURATO, QUI TAM MANIFESTO FUMOS VENDIT, ME NON CREDITURUM ESSE CON-FIRMO."

I am astonished that any man could think this state of the case probable. The question between Origen and the Jews was not what was the word in the Hebrew, but what was the meaning of it in a particular place. But even, admitting that the dispute was about the true reading in the original, what great matter was there in Origen's saying *the Jews said so*, when he knew that what they said was

* Εαν δε Ισδορας ερεσινλογων, το ιδε η παρθενος μη γεγραφειν λεγει αλλ' οτι αυτε ιδε η νεαυς· φασμεν προς αυτον. οτι μεν η μεν λεξις η αλυσ η ο μεν εδωκεναι μελεωφαισι προς την παρθενον αλλοι δε ες την νεαυς, αυτε ως φασι· ε εν τα δευτερονου εστι παρθενος κως εχουα. Bib. i. p. 27.

true?

true? Is this a foundation on which to affirm that you would not take a man's evidence upon his oath. What an appetite must a man have for calumny, who can seize upon such a circumstance as this to gratify it?

Fœnum habet in cornu, hunc tu, Romane, caveto.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R II.

General Observations relating to the supposed orthodox church of Jewish christians at Jerusalem, after the time of Adrian.

REV. SIR,

HAVING fully considered what you have alleged in support of your extraordinary charge of *wilful falsehood* in Origen, because the supposition of his being an honest man was inconsistent with the existence of your church of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian, I shall proceed to consider the *positive evidence* that you have produced for the actual existence
of

of such a church. But I shall, in the first place, mention some observations of a general nature relating to the subject.

That there was a christian church at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian, we all acknowledge ; but you say, p. 41, " the point in dispute between us is, " of what members the church of *Ælia* was composed. He says of converts of Gentile extraction, I say, of Hebrews, of the very same persons, in the greater part, who were members of the ancient Hebrew church at the time when the Jews were subdued by Adrian."

1. Now that the members of this church were not Jews, but Greeks, I think indisputable from this plain consideration, that after the time of Adrian the bishops of that church were Greeks, and that the language in which the public offices were performed was Greek ; whereas immediately before the bishops had been Hebrews, and the public offices had been in the Hebrew tongue.

2. If there was any considerable body of orthodox Jewish christians, it is extraordinary that no particular mention should be made of them by any ancient writer. Jerom speaks of his acquaintance with learned Ebionites by whom he was taught the Hebrew tongue. Living as he did in the country, he might as easily, on your idea, have found learned orthodox Jewish christians, with whom it would have been more agreeable to him to associate, unless
you

you suppose that the learned Ebionites were heretics, and the unlearned orthodox.

3. As so many writers speak of Ebionites, or heterodox Nazarenes, it would surely have been natural for some of them to have added, that they were not the great body, or at least not the whole, of the Jewish christians. The mention of the one would naturally have drawn after it, on some occasion, the mention of the other. And yet no ancient writer speaks of them.

4. As to *a whole church* of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem, or elsewhere, we hear of no intercourse between any such church and other orthodox churches. None of their bishops, or deputies from them, appear at any council; no appeals are ever made to them; which would have been natural, as to the mother of all the churches. This is easily accounted for on the supposition that all the remains of the Jewish christians were the poor and despised unitarian Ebionites, residing chiefly beyond the sea of Galilee, whose numbers likewise were inconsiderable; but hard to be supposed, if there were any churches of orthodox Jewish christians, residing at Jerusalem, or elsewhere.

5. If there was any considerable body of orthodox Jewish christians, why do we never hear of any Hebrew gospels besides that of Matthew? If they held the doctrine of the orthodox gentile churches concerning the person of Christ, it is probable that

C

they

they would have had the same respect for the other gospels, and the other books of the New Testament, and yet it is almost certain, that they made little use of them.

By way of apology for your additions to the scanty accounts of the ancients, concerning the conquest of Jerusalem by Adrian, you say, p. 38, “ The ecclesiastical history of those times is so very general and imperfect, that whoever attempts to make out a consistent story from any ancient writers which are come down to us, will find himself under the necessity of helping out their broken accounts by his own conjectures.”

But certainly, Sir, the *contradicting* of an ancient writer, is not the way to *help out* his account of things. Now Eusebius, the oldest writer who mentions the fact, says, that after the taking of the city by Adrian, the whole nation of the Jews (παν εθν, which excludes all distinction with respect to religion) were forbidden even to see the desolation of their metropolis at a distance *. To *help out this broken account*, because it does not contain all that you wish it to do (though I see nothing *broken* in it) you say that the Jews were allowed to remain in the place, and enjoy the privileges of the Ælian colony, on

* Και τε της απονομιας αυλοις αυτου την αξιαν εκλίσαντο δικην, το παν εθν εξ εκεινυ και της περι τα Ιεροσολυμα γης παντακ επιβαν ειργειαι, νομις δογματι και διαλαξεσιν Αδριανυ ως αν μηδ' εξ αποστει θεωροειν το παλιον εδαφο εγκλευσταμενυ. Hist. Lib. iv. cap. 6.

condition

condition of their becoming christians. To help out this addition, I would farther add, that another of the terms of the capitulation was, that they should from that time speak Greek, as without this, they could have derived no benefit from the offices of a Greek church.

Sulpicius says, that by this severity to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Adrian thought to destroy the christian faith. But to this you oppose the authority of Orosius (calling it, however, p. 43, but a *feather* in the scale) that when the Jews were excluded, the christians were allowed to remain. If your liberty of *helping out a broken story* may be exercised here, I should say, that in the idea even of this writer, the *Greek* christians might remain, but the *Jewish* not. If any regard is to be paid to Eusebius, the oldest historian, or to Sulpicius, who is much more circumstantial than Orosius, and on that account better entitled to credit, no Jews, christians or others, were allowed to remain in the place.

To make your account the more probable, you say, p. 44, "It is a notorious fact that Adrian was
 "not unfavourable to the christians, and that the
 "church in his reign obtained a respite from per-
 "secution." But how far did this favour to christians extend? You say, "the fury of their persecutors was restrained by the imperial rescripts to
 "the provincial governors, who were directed not
 "to proceed against the christians, except by way of
 "regular trial, upon the allegation of some certain
 C 2 "crime,

“ crime, and when nothing more was alleged than
“ the bare name of christianity, to punish the in-
“ former as a sycophant.” That is, as the history
of those times enables us to interpret it, they were
not to be punished as christians till they were proved
to be so, which was the case in the reign of Trajan;
but does not amount to a toleration of the Jews at
Jerusalem, on condition of their embracing christianity.

Your favourite Mosheim says (Hist. vol. i. p. 128) that what was done by Adrian (in whose reign the persecution of christians had raged with peculiar violence) was a solemn renewal of the law of Trajan. In the reign of Antoninus Pius, but not before, it was ordered that a man being proved to be a christian, should not be deemed sufficient for his condemnation, unless he was also proved to have been guilty of some crime against the state. There is, therefore, little reason to think that Adrian was so well disposed towards christianity, as to permit the rebellious Jews to remain in Jerusalem on condition of their embracing it.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R III.

Of the Testimony of Epiphanius to the Existence of a Church of Orthodox Jewish Christians at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian.

REV. SIR,

AFTER the preliminary observations contained in the preceding letter, I shall now consider the testimony that you have produced from Epiphanius.

You say. p. 46, that “the *fact* (viz. of the return of the Jews from Pella to Jerusalem, after the wars of Adrian) of which Dr. Priestley has done me “the honour to make me the inventor, is asserted “by Epiphanius.—The confidence,” you add, “with which he mentions this, as a fact forged “by me, is only one instance, out of a great “number, of his own shameless intrepidity in “assertion.”

If, Sir, you wish to reclaim a person, you should never deprive him of *all* character, but should leave him a *little*, a small root, from which *more* may afterwards spring. Having now no character to lose, being capable of asserting any thing,

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true

true or false, that is likely to answer my purpose, I will, "with the most shameless intrepidity," assert, that Epiphanius mentions no such *fact* as you so very confidently suppose him to have done. After carefully examining the passage which you have produced, I do maintain, that in it he makes no mention whatever of any return of christian Jews from Pella, besides that which took place after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and not at all of any return after the destruction by Adrian. This is most evident, from attending to the very next sentence which follows the words that you have quoted. The whole passage is as follows :

After mentioning Aquila, as appointed by Adrian, the inspector of his works at Ælia, Epiphanius gives the following history of him.—
 "Aquila, living at Jerusalem, and seeing the disciples of the disciples of the apostles flourishing in the faith, and working great miracles, especially of healing (For they had returned from the city of Pella to Jerusalem, and taught there. For when the city was about to be taken by the Romans, all the disciples had been forwarned by an angel to leave the city, which was devoted to destruction. These, leaving it, went and dwelt in the above-mentioned Pella, beyond Jordan, one of those that were called Decapolis; but returning after the desolation of Jerusalem, as I have said, worked miracles). Aquila, therefore, being convinced, became a christian, and
 "after

“ after some time requesting the seal of christi-
 “ ty [viz. baptism] obtained it *.”

What can be more evident, than that the re-
 turn of the Jewish christians from Pella, mention-
 ed in this passage by Epiphanius, is that return
 which followed the destruction of Jerusalem by
 Titus? For he speaks of their having left that
 city, antecedent to *this return* to it, in consequence
 of being warned by an angel so to do, which was
 said to be the case before the destruction by
 Titus, but never before that by Adrian; and it
 was by the disciples of those who then returned,
 that Aquila was converted to christianity, which
 was probably a considerable time before the de-
 struction of the Jews by Adrian.

After the imperfect quotation of the passage of
 which I have given the entire translation, you have

* Ο τοιων Ακυλας, διαγων εν τη Ιερουσαλημ, και ορων της μαθητίας
 των μαθητών αποπολων ανδυνίας τη πωσει, και σημεια μεγαλα εργαζο-
 μενης, ιασεων και αλλων θαυμαίων. ησαν γαρ υπογραφειαντες απο Πελλης
 της πολεως εις Ιερουσαλημ, και διδασκουτες, ηνικα γαρ ημελλεν η πολις
 αλισκεσθαι υπο των Ρωμαιων, προεχρηματισθησαν υπο αγγελου, παν-
 τες οι μαθηται μελασθαι απο της πολεως μελλουσης αρθην απολλυσθαι :
 οι τινες, και μελανασθαι γενομενοι, ωκησαν εν Πελλη τη προτεγεγραμμενη
 πολει, περαν τη Ιορδανη, ητις εκ δεκαπολεως λεγεται ειναι. μελα δε την
 εφημωσιν Ιερουσαλημ υπογραφειαντες, ως εφην, σημεια μεγαλα επείλεν.
 Ο εν Ακυλας κατανυγεις την διανοιαν, τω χριστιανισμω επιτευσεν. αιτη-
 σας δε μελα χρεον την εν χριστω σφραγιδα, εκομισατο. De men-
 suris et ponderibus, Opera, vol. 2. p. 171.

the assurance to add, p. 47, "Whether this return
" of the christians of Jerusalem from Pella, took
" place in the interval between the end of Titus's
" war and the commencement of Adrian's, or af-
" ter the end of Adrian's, is a matter of no im-
" portance. It is sufficient for my purpose that
" these returned christians were residing at Jerusa-
" lem, or more properly at Ælia, at the same
" time that Aquila was residing there, as overseer
" of the emperor's works. Let not the public be
" abused by any cavils which ignorance or fraud
" may raise about the chronology of the return."

But certainly it must be of consequence to know, whether Aquila was residing at Jerusalem after the destruction of that city by Adrian; and this is more than Epiphanius says, or is at all probable in itself. For the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Adrian, in which Aquila was employed by him, was undertaken in the 13th year of his reign, a year before the revolt of the Jews; and it was not till the 18th of Adrian, that they were entirely subdued.

According to Epiphanius, Aquila, after his conversion to christianity by the descendants of the Jewish christians, who were returned from Pella (retaining his former practices) was excommunicated by them. After this he became a Jew, and applying himself to the study of the scriptures, made a translation of them into Greek.
This

This translation Cave supposes to have been made A. D. 128, or 129, the 11th or 12th of Adrian. His conversion to christianity, therefore, was probably prior to the reign of Adrian; and yet that is the only circumstance that proves any intercourse he ever had with Jewish christians returned from Pella. On which side then is *the ignorance*, I say nothing of *the fraud*, of which you suspect me in this business? You must, Sir, dig deeper than you have yet done, for the foundation of this favourite church.

I am, &c,

L E T T E R IV.

Of the Evidence from Jerom in Favour of the Existence of a Church of Orthodox Jewish Christians at Jerusalem after the Time of Adrian.

REV. SIR,

I COME now to the two passages which you have quoted from Jerom. That on which you lay the greatest stress you introduce in the following manner. "But I give him Origen," p. 48. "I will rest the credit of my seventh position upon the mention which occurs in Jerom's Commentary upon Isaiah, of *Hebrews believing in Christ*, as distinct from the *Nazarenes*. Jerom

“rom relates two different expositions of the prophecy concerning Zabulon and Naphtali, delivered in the beginning of the 9th chapter of Isaiah, of which expositions he ascribes the one to the *Hebrews believing in Christ*, the other to the *Nazarenes*. The character given of these Hebrews, that they *believed in Christ*, without any thing to distinguish their belief from the common belief of the church, without any note of its error or imperfection, is a plain character of complete orthodoxy.”

It is somewhat remarkable, that having before maintained, that those whom Jerom called *Nazarenes*, in his epistle to Austin, were *orthodox christians*, you should now allow that, by the same term, he here means *heretics*; and that the phrase, *believing in Christ*, should now be a character of *complete orthodoxy*, when in that epistle it is predicated of the heretical Ebionites. What clue can we have to any man's meaning, if he be supposed to use terms in such different, and even opposite senses? When neither himself, nor any other writer, ever says that there *were* two such very different kinds of Nazarenes, what right can you have to assert that there were?

The passage in Jerom on which, though you lay so much stress, you do not quote, is as follows. In his interpretation of Isaiah ix. 14. (cited in Matt. iv. 6.) he says, “Galilee of
“the

“ the Gentiles Aquila translates *divas* of the Gen-
 “ tiles, and Symmachus *the boundaries* of the Gen-
 “ tiles. By *divas* we understand heaps of sand on
 “ sea coasts, or shores. The Hebrews believing in
 “ Christ, interpret the passage in this manner. At
 “ first these two tribes, Zabulon and Naphtali,
 “ were taken by the Assyrians, and carried into
 “ their enemies country, and Galilee was destroyed ;
 “ which the prophet now says was relieved, because
 “ he bore the sins of the people. But afterwards
 “ not only the two tribes, but the rest that dwelled
 “ beyond Jordan, in Samaria, were carried cap-
 “ tive. And this they say the scripture now de-
 “ clares, that the country whose people were first
 “ carried captive, and began to serve the Babylo-
 “ nians, and which was first involved in the dark-
 “ nefs of error, was the first to see the light of
 “ Christ preaching to them, and from it the gospel
 “ was preached to all other nations. The Naza-
 “ renes, *whose opinion I have given above*, thus en-
 “ deavour to explain the passage. Christ coming,
 “ and his preaching shining forth, in the first place
 “ the country of Zabulon and Naphtalim, being
 “ delivered from the error of the scribes and phari-
 “ sees, shook from their necks the heavy yoke of
 “ Jewish traditions ; but afterwards, by the preach-
 “ ing of the apostle Paul, who was the last of the
 “ apostles, the preaching was increased, or multi-
 “ plied, and the gospel of Christ shone to the ut-
 “ most boundaries of the Gentiles, and of the ocean.
 “ Then all the world, which before walked, or sat,
 “ in darknes, and was held in the chains of
 “ idolatry

“ idolatry and death, saw the clear light of the
“ gospel *.”

Before you can show that this passage, on which you lay so much stress, is at all to your purpose, you must prove the three following things. First, that *the Hebrews believing in Christ* were different from the *Nazarenes*. Secondly, that the former

* *Pro Galilea Gentium* Aquila *Ἰβας* gentium, Symmachus, terminos gentium interpretati sunt: *Ἰβας*, autem tumulos intelligimus arenarum, qui vel in littoribus vel in ripis sunt Hebræi credentes in Christum hunc locum ita edisserunt. Primo tempore hæ duæ tribus Zabulon et Nephtalim ab Assyriis captæ sunt et ductæ in hostilem terram, & Galilæa deserta est, quam nunc propheta dicit alleviatam esse, eo quod peccata populi sustineret. Postea autem non solum duæ tribus, sed et reliquæ quæ habitabant trans Jordanem in Samaria, ductæ sunt in captivitatem. Et hoc, inquiunt scriptura nunc dicit, quod regii cujus populus primus ductus est in captivitatem & Babiloniis servire cœpit, et quæ prius in tenebris versabatur erroris, ipse primum lucem prædicantis viderit Christi, et ex ea in universas gentes sit evangelium seminatum. Nazaræi, quorum opinionem supra posui, hunc locum ita explanare conantur. Adveniente Christo, et prædicatione illius coruscante, prima terra Zabulon & terra Nephtalim scribarum et pharisæorum est erroribus liberata, et gravissimum traditionum Judaicarum jugum excussit de cervicibus suis. Postea autem per evangelium apostoli Pauli, qui novissimus apostolorum omnium fuit, ingravata est, i. e. multiplicata prædicatio, & in terminos gentium & viam universi maris Christi evangelium splenduit. Denique omnis orbis, qui ante ambulabat vel sedebat in tenebris, & idolatriæ ac mortis vinculis tenebatur, clarum evangelicum lumen aspexit. Opera, vol. 4. p. 33.

were

were completely orthodox ; and thirdly, that those orthodox Jewish christians resided at Jerusalem. And it appears to me that not one of these suppositions is at all probable.

That by *Nazarenes* Jerom did not intend any other than the *Hebrews believing in Christ*, but only meant to vary his mode of expression, is probable from this consideration ; that, after giving a translation of the passage by Aquila and Symmachus, both Ebionites, he speaks of the interpretation of the prophecy by the Hebrew christians in general, and then says, the Nazarenes, *whose opinion he had given above*, explained, or illustrated it, in the manner that has been represented. The opinion to which he referred, as *given above*, was, therefore, probably, that of *the Hebrews believing in Christ*. And the explanations of the passage are not at all *different* from one another, but the latter a farther illustration of the former ; the one being an interpretation of the prophecy, and the latter a more particular application of it to the time of Christ, and the gospel.

This passage, therefore, which you have quoted as decisively in your favour, instead of proving that the *Hebrews believing in Christ* were different from the *Nazarenes*, furnishes an additional argument that, in the idea of Jerom, they were the very same people ; if it does not also prove that their opinions were the same with those of Aquila and Symmachus, or of the Ebionites.

You

You may, indeed, say that the opinion of the Nazarenes to which Jerom refers, as *given above*, was that account of the Nazarenes which is found in his commentary on the preceding chapter, viz. "their so receiving Christ as not to abandon the old law." But the remoteness of the passage, and its having no relation to the subject of which he is treating in his commentary on the ninth chapter, make it improbable.

2. Admitting that Jerom alluded to some difference between the *Hebrews believing in Christ* and the *Nazarenes*, it is far from following, that the former were *completely orthodox*, and the latter not. For the phrase *believing in Christ* is applied both by Origen and Jerom to the heretical Jewish christians. His not expressly saying that they were *heretics* in this place, on which you lay so much stress, can never prove that they were *completely orthodox*; since their heresy had nothing to do with the subject of which Jerom is here treating.

All the difference between these two descriptions of Jewish christians that Jerom *can* be supposed to allude to, is such a one as Origen made of two sorts of Ebionites, viz. one who believed the miraculous conception, and the other who disbelieved it; or that of Justin, viz. of those who would hold communion with the gentile christians, and those who would not.

" It

“It must strike the learned reader,” you say, p. 53, “that the Nazarenes mentioned by St. Jerom, in the passage to which I now refer, of his annotations on Isaiah, must have been a different people from those mentioned by him with such contempt in his epistle to St. Austin, and described by Epiphanius. The Nazarenes here mentioned by St. Jerom, held the Scribes and Pharisees in detestation, their traditions in contempt, and the apostle St. Paul in high veneration.” Now I see no intimation in this passage, of there being any other kinds of Nazarenes, or Jewish christians, besides such as Paul found at Jerusalem in his last journey thither, the more intelligent of them being his friends, and rejoicing in the success of his preaching. But even his greatest enemies must have admitted, that the knowledge of christianity was extended by his means, which is all that Jerom says of the Nazarenes in this place. As to the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, we read of no Jewish christians who did not hold them in contempt.

3. Allowing both that the *Hebrews believing in Christ* and the *Nazarenes* were different people, and that the former were completely orthodox, it will not follow that there was a church of them at Jerusalem, which is the thing that you contend for.

“On these foundations,” however, you say, p. 51, “which a stronger arm than Dr. Priestley’s shall not be able to tear up, stands the church of orthodox
3 “Jewish

“ Jewish christians at Jerusalem, to which the as-
 “ sertors of the catholic faith will not scruple to
 “ appeal, in proof of the antiquity of their doctrine,
 “ whatever offence the very mention of the ortho-
 “ dox church at Jerusalem may give to the enraged
 “ Heresiarch.”

Alas! these *new foundations*, being, like the former, built upon the sand, are also completely swept away. I will add, that he must be a bolder man than he that rebuilt Jericho, who shall attempt to restore them.

But this is not the only passage in Jerom to which you appeal. You also say, p. 58, that “ he mentions Nazarenes who held the doctrine of our Lord’s divinity. For, by an exposition of Isaiah, viii. 13, 14. which St. Jerom ascribes to them, it appears that they acknowledged in Christ the *יהוה צבאות* [the Lord of Hosts] of the Old Testament.” For any thing like a shadow of a proof of this most extraordinary assertion, I a long time looked in vain, and thought the reference must have been misprinted; but at length, considering what kind of a reasoner I had to do with, I believe I discovered your real ideas on the subject.

The prophet says (ch. viii. 13, 14.) *Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; and he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence,*

to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

In his commentary on this passage, Jerom says, “ the Nazarenes (who so received Christ, as not to abandon the observance of the old law) interpret these two houses of Sammai and Hillel, from which arose the scribes and pharisees, &c. and that these were the *two houses* which did not receive the Saviour, who was to them for a destruction and an offence *.”

Jerom, however, does not make the inference that you do, viz. that because the Nazarenes thought that this prophecy referred to the times of Christ, and to his rejection by the scribes and pharisees, they believed Christ to be the *Lord of Hosts*. They only call him *the Saviour*, meaning, probably a person speaking and acting by authority from

* *Duas domus Nazarei* (qui ita Christum recipiunt ut observationes legis veteris non amittant) duas familias interpretantur Samai et Hillel, ex quibus orti sunt scribæ et pharisei, quorum suscepit scholam Axibas, quem magistrum Aquilæ profeliti autumant, et post eum Meir; cui successit Johannes, filius Zacharæi, et post eum Eliezer, et per ordinem Delphon, et rursus Joseph Galilæus, et usque ad captivitatem Hierusalem Josue. Samai igitur et Hillel, non multo prius quam dominus nasceretur orti sunt in Judæa, quorum prior *dissipator* interpretatur, sequens *prophanus*; eo quod per traditiones et *devispocis* suas, legis præcepta dissipaverint atque maculaverint. Et has esse *duas domus*, quæ salvatorem non receperint, qui factus sit eis in ruinam et in scandalum. Opera, vol. 4. p. 32.

D

God,

God, who was in reality rejected by those who rejected his messenger, though a *mere man*. As our Lord himself says, Luke x. 6. *He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* On this ground you might rank both the Nazarenes, and all the modern professed unitarians, with believers in the divinity of Christ. You might even make them believers in the divinity of the apostles, and that of all the preachers of the gospel. But having no better evidence of the orthodoxy of the Nazarenes, you were obliged to make the best of this, which will prove a great deal too much.

I wonder, however, that this mode of interpreting scripture does not stagger even yourself. I thought that the most orthodox of the present day had believed that the person characterised by the title of *the Lord of Hosts* had been not *the Son*, but *the Father*. If the *Lord*, i. e. *Jehovah*, of *Hosts*, which is no doubt synonymous to *Jehovah*, absolutely so called, be *the Son*, it will be difficult to find *the Father* any where in the Old Testament.

Thus I have considered all the evidence, positive or presumptive, that you have produced for the existence of a church of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian. I have particularly considered your five *quotations* from ancient writers, and do not find that so much as one of them is at all to your purpose.

Thus

Thus again ends this church of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem, planted by Mosheim, and destroyed by the too copious watering of the Arch-deacon of St. Albans.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R V.

Of the Miraculous Conception.

REV. SIR,

YOUR *Sermon on the Incarnation* ought to be considered as making part of our controversy; and indeed it might with more propriety have been entitled a Discourse against myself, as you have contrived to introduce into it reflections on every opinion that I have at any time advanced, that you could think would make me appear in an obnoxious light. But for this I am not sorry; because the more those opinions are kept in view, the sooner will the horror they at first inspire go off. In time mankind will be less offended at them, and may come to approve what they now dislike. As to mere *abuse*, in which light only those reflections can be considered as they appear in this Sermon, I

D 2

think

think my *time*, and even my *ink*, of too much value to be thrown away in answering it.

As to the *miraculous conception*, to which your Sermon chiefly relates, I do not pretend to make myself a party for or against it, having only endeavoured to supply materials for forming a right judgment in the case. But I cannot help observing that, instead of new *light*, you have thrown upon it a great mass of additional *darkness*, and of a deeper shade than any thing that has been produced by the christian Fathers, at least till long after the council of Nice.

With respect to the *importance* of the doctrine you say, p. 7, that, “ as an article of the christian
 “ faith, it is evidently the foundation of the whole
 “ distinction between the character of Christ, in the
 “ condition of a man, and that of any other prophet.
 “ Had the conception of Jesus been in the
 “ natural way, had he been the fruit of Mary’s
 “ marriage with her husband, his intercourse with
 “ the Deity could have been of no other kind than
 “ the nature of any other man might have equally
 “ admitted,—and how it should differ (p. 9.)
 “ otherwise than in the degree of frequency
 “ and intimacy, it will not be easy to explain, unless
 “ we adhere to the faith transmitted to us from the
 “ primitive ages, and believe that the eternal word,
 “ who was in the beginning with God, and was
 “ God, so joined to himself the holy thing which
 “ was formed in Mary’s womb, that the two na-
 “ tures,

“tures, from the commencement of the virgin’s
 “conception, made one person—Jesus, accord-
 “ing to the primitive doctrine, was so united to
 “the ever-living word, that the very existence of
 “the man consisted in this union.”

“It was,” you say, p. 11, “clearly the doctrine of
 “holy writ, and nothing else, which the Fathers as-
 “serted, in terms borrowed from the schools of phi-
 “losophy, when they affirmed, that the very prin-
 “ciple of personality and individual existence in
 “Mary’s son, was union with the uncreated word.
 “A doctrine in which the miraculous conception
 “would have been implied, had the thing not been
 “recorded; since a man conceived in the ordinary
 “way would have derived the principles of his ex-
 “istence from the mere physical powers of genera-
 “tion. Union with the divine nature could not
 “have been the principle of an existence physically
 “derived from Adam; and that intimate union of
 “God and man in the Redeemer’s person, which
 “the scriptures so clearly assert, had been a physical
 “impossibility.”

You add, p. 13, “On the other hand, it were
 “not difficult to shew, that the miraculous concep-
 “tion, once admitted, naturally brings up after it
 “the great doctrines of the atonement, and the in-
 “carnation.”

To these uncouth assertions, expressed in lan-
 guage utterly unintelligible, and equally unwarranted

by scripture, or reason, I shall make no particular reply. *He that can receive them, let him receive them.* I shall only observe, in general, that if I should profess myself an opponent of the doctrine of the miraculous conception, I could not wish for a fuller refutation of it, than your being able to prove that these very absurd doctrines do, as you say, necessarily depend upon it. I shall add, that if Christ had so extraordinary a communication with God, in consequence of his having no father, what must have been the case with Adam, who had neither father nor mother?

When you shall see what I have advanced on this subject, in the fourth volume of my *History of early Opinions concerning Christ*, you will be better qualified to write about it than you were at the time of composing this Sermon. This *History* you ironically, p. 12, call my GREAT WORK, printing it twice in capitals. This work, which is now before the public, and may be in your hands, you are welcome to treat ironically, or seriously, as you please. But you will lead many of your readers to conclude, that I had myself called it a *great work*, whereas I do not recollect that I have any where called it more than a *large work*, which does not imply so much vanity as, in p. 86, you ascribe to me. If that work should stand its ground against the fierce attacks of the Archdeacon of St. Albans, the learned Professor of Arabic at Oxford, the more learned Mr. Howes of Norwich, and the other learned orthodox

rhodox divines, at home and abroad, whose animadversions it openly challenges, it may deserve a more honourable epithet than I have yet given it. At present it is only a candidate for the approbation of those who are proper judges of its merit.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

Miscellaneous Articles.

REV. SIR,

WERE I disposed to indulge myself in noticing all the strange positions, and inconclusive reasonings, with which your *Remarks* abound, I should make a much larger work than I fear my readers would care to *look through*. Having, therefore, abundantly refuted every thing on which you yourself pretend to lay the most stress, I shall be very short in my remarks on other things, to which, however, you strongly solicit my attention.

D 4

I. As

I.

As to my construction of *the passage in Athanasius*, we are sufficiently come to an issue. I am fully satisfied with what I have advanced in support of it, and have nothing to add; and, contemptuously as you treat it, p. 32, I should not feel myself disposed to distrust it on that account, even if I had not the concurrence of such names as Beausobre and Dr. Lardner in my favour. I do not know that you can produce the name of any writer whatever in favour of your interpretation.

II.

With respect to *the passages from Chrysostom*, you will find in my *larger work* (if you should condescend to look into such a quantity of *unfinished literature*) that your construction of his meaning is contradicted by himself. You yourself, however, acknowledge all that I want, when you say, p. 32, "the apostles first taught what was easiest to be learned, and went on to higher points, as the minds of their catechumens became able to bear them." For, in reality, it makes no difference from whatever *motive* it was that the apostles did not chuse to teach the doctrine of Christ's divinity, or of the trinity. If christians were not *taught* those doctrines, they could not *know* them, and consequently they must have been unitarians, till they were instructed in them; and this, as all the Fathers say, was not till the publication of the gospel of John.

The

The learned and judicious Mr. Basnage, though a trinitarian, very frankly acknowledges, that Christ found the Jews in utter ignorance of the divinity of their Messiah, that his object was, "to accustom them insensibly to a mystery so much above their reason, and foreseeing that the church would revolt against it." Chrysostom, he says, has succeeded in maintaining this. Hist. des Juifs. L. v. cap. ix. f. 3.

III.

You are pleased to ridicule my *Logic*, p. 13, as confounding *being*, *substance*, and *substratum*, and you find me "unapprized of that great principle, without which a logician will handle his tools but awkwardly, that the genus cannot be predicated of the specific differences." I cannot tell where you learned this curious logic, with which I acknowledge I am utterly unacquainted; and I imagine it is equally unknown to common sense. For, according to it, since *men* are divided into *Whites* and *Blacks*, &c. &c. and the Whites may be subdivided into those of Europe and Asia, &c. and the Blacks into the Negroes of Africa, and other distinct species in other parts of the world, it would follow, that it cannot with propriety be said of any particular Whites or Blacks, that they are *men*, and it would be still less proper to say that they are *animals* or *creatures*, and least of all that they are *beings*, that is, that they have any existence at all. However, it is unusually modest in you, to allow that even *great men* have fallen into the same error with

with myself, "in supposing that *being* is an universal "genus, under which all other genera rank as species." I am content to class with these great men, greater, as you say, than myself.

IV.

I am particularly amused with your account of *the dissenters* in this country, with whom it may be presumed that I am better acquainted than you are. And yet, in contradiction to what I asserted, and to what I am confident every dissenting minister, of any denomination whatever, will acknowledge to be true, you largely maintain, p. 63, that "Calvinism is almost extinguished among us." However, I the less wonder at your ignorance of *ancient sects* when you so peremptorily decide with respect to *modern ones*, arguing on the most fallacious principles, and neglecting, or despising, the surest and the most easily accessible sources of information. I sincerely wish, that the *rational Dissenters* were more numerous than they are; but the smallness of their number, compared to that of the Calvinistic dissenters, is a clear proof of the truth of my general maxim, that great bodies do not soon change their opinions; and that maxim affords the strongest presumption that the body of christians, having, according to the acknowledgement of all the Fathers, been at first unitarians, could not soon become trinitarians. Accordingly, there are the clearest indications that, in fact, they continued to be unitarians for several centuries.

V. You

V.

You have taken great, but unnecessary pains, to prove that the places in which Mr. Lindsey and myself officiate, are properly *conventicles*, p. 72, because we who preach in them are not authorised by law. It is a matter of little consequence by what name they are called, since, even in the worst and most obnoxious sense of the term, as *places unauthorised by law*, the apostles generally preached in conventicles.

I should think, however, that if, by any accident, an unauthorised dissenting minister, like myself, should preach in a *parish church*, it would not, on that account, become a *conventicle*, and require re-consecration. And if not, neither does the building in which I officiate, being licensed according to law, and therefore *in itself* no conventicle, become one in consequence of my preaching in it.

VI.

You have a whole chapter *on the general spirit of my controversial writings*, in which you take much pains to exhibit me as a man whose designs are hostile to my country, and who has no pretension to the character of a *good christian*, or a *good subject*. I rejoice that I am reproached on this account, as I am conscious that it is unmerited, and shall only observe, that the same things, and on the very same grounds, were said of Luther, and may be said of any man who shall endeavour to reform any thing
that

that he finds established in the country in which he is born. For it is impossible that any man should wish for a new and better state of things, without wishing for an alteration of the old and worse state ; and if he may on this account be denominated an enemy to the country in which that old and worst state prevails, a physician must, on the same principle, be deemed the enemy of his patient, whose disorders he wishes to cure, and especially if, in order to it, he has recourse to unpleasing remedies.

At the same time that you profess the greatest moderation, you cannot conceal your secret wishes for the interference of some *aid from a foreign quarter*. You say, indeed, p. 82, "Whatever Dr. Priestley may affect to think of the intolerance of churchmen in general, or of the Archdeacon of St. Alban's in particular, a churchman lives not in the present age so weak, who would not, in policy, if not in love, discourage, rather than promote any thing that might be called a *persecution* of the unitarian blasphemy, in the person of Dr. Priestley, or of any of his admirers. A churchman lives not so weak, as not to know, that persecution is the hot-bed in which nonsense and impiety have ever thrived." I wish, Sir, I could persuade myself that this was true. For there certainly are some very weak churchmen, who, having less confidence in the force of *argument* than you have, may be alarmed too soon, and cry, *the church is in danger* ; in which case you would

would yourself think the interference of *civil power* very proper.

Confiding, however, in the good sense and moderation of my countrymen in general, though not in that of the clergy in particular, I shall persist in using that liberty which the laws *ought* to give me. Unitarianism has flourished very well, as you allow, in persecution. Let the experiment be fairly made, and we shall see whether it will not flourish as well in that state of perfect freedom, which the generous temper of the times gives us.

In a spirit very different from the general professions quoted above, you cannot forbear to insinuate, that my designs are truly alarming to the state, and say, p. 82, "If Dr. Priestley ever should attempt to execute the smallest part of what he would now be understood to threaten, it may then be expedient that the magistrate should shew that he beareth not the sword in vain."

You say, p. 83, "Let us trust for the present, as we securely may, to the trade of the good town of Birmingham, and to the wise connivance of the magistrate (who watches, no doubt, while he deems it politic to wink) to nip Dr. Priestley's goodly projects in the bud; which nothing would be so likely to ripen to a dangerous effect, as constraint excessively or unseasonably used."

"Thanks,

“ Thanks, however, are due to him from all lovers
“ of their country, for the mischief which he wants
“ not the inclination to do, if he could find the
“ the means of doing it. In gratitude’s estimation,
“ the will is ever to be taken for the deed.” What
is this but saying, that it would be wise and right
to nip my projects even in the bud, if there was
any prospect of my succeeding in them? And what
could a Bonner or a Gardener say more? They
would never have burned men alive, if it had not
been to prevent what they thought to be *mischief*.
Indeed, Sir, you do not know what spirit you
are of.

But my projects are more than in the bud. I
am at this very time actually executing all that I
would be understood to threaten, or ever have
threatened. I am endeavouring, by all the means
in my power, to rouse the attention of thinking
men in this country to the corrupt state of the re-
ligion that is established in it, and especially to
convince them of the mischievous tendency of wor-
shipping Christ as a God, when christianity dis-
claims all knowledge of any other God than one,
and that *the God and Father of Christ*; being confi-
dent that when this is effected (and towards this con-
siderable progress is visibly making every day, and
it has met with no obstruction since the commence-
ment of this controversy) not only will the present
forms of trinitarian worship be abolished, but my
countrymen will then thank me, and my friends,
for

for what we may have contributed towards so glorious a *revolution*. Till this be actually effected, you will naturally call our attempts *rebellious*. In the mean time, convince our governors, if you can, that the country will suffer in its wealth, population, power, &c. &c. by the people becoming unitarians.

Whatever you may insinuate to the contrary, the real nature, and full extent of my views (which I carry on in obedience to a greater power than any in this world) might easily be seen by yourself, especially in my late *Observations on freedom of inquiry in matters of religion*. There you might also have seen that the dreadful *engine*, by means of which I hope to accomplish my dangerous designs, is *free discussion*, or *controversy*,—an obstinate controversy, in which much *rest*, but I hope no *lives*, will be lost—much *ink*, but no *blood*, will be spilled; and in this I consider the Archdeacon of St. Albans; Mr. White, Mr. Howes, and all my opponents, as my *coadjutors*; for without such *concurrence*, no *controversy* could be carried on. But “the weapons
“ of our warfare are not carnal.”

To yourself, Sir, in particular, the world is indebted for whatever there may be of value in my large *History of early opinions concerning Christ*. For without the link that you put into the chain of *causes and effects*, mechanically operating in my mind, the very idea of that work would not, I believe, have occurred to me. And I trust that a fire
still

still more destructive to error and superstition, and consequently to all the ecclesiastical establishments in the world, which are built upon and promote them, will be raised by the concurrence of your seasonable pains in blowing up the flame of this controversy; which will not, I trust, be extinguished, till its end be effectually answered.

Lest you should again relapse into your criminal indolence of *eighteen months*, consider that the great danger on which you, Sir, first founded the alarm (and Mr. White has sounded the horn of battle still louder) is now more threatening than ever. I hope that you and your brethren will never drop the spirit which breathed in your famous *Charge to the Archdeaconry of St. Albans*. Lest you should remit of your ardour, I shall here recite one paragraph from it.

“ The restless spirit of scepticism will suggest difficulties in the system, and create doubts about the particulars of the christian doctrine: difficulties *must* be removed and doubts *must* be satisfied. But above all, the scruples *must* be composed which the refinements of a false philosophy, patronized as they are in the present age by men no less amiable for the general purity of their manners, than distinguished by their scientific attainments, will be too apt to raise in the minds of their weaker brethren. And this
“ is

“ is the service to which they, whom the indulgence
 “ of providence hath released from the more labo-
 “ rious office of the priesthood, stand peculiarly en-
 “ gaged. To them their more occupied brethren
 “ have a right to look up in these emergencies, for
 “ support and succour in the common cause. It is
 “ for them to stand forth the champions of the com-
 “ mon faith, and the advocates of their order. It
 “ is for them to wipe off the aspersion injuriously
 “ cast upon the sons of the establishment, as unin-
 “ formed in the true grounds of the doctrine which
 “ they teach, or insincere in the belief of it. To
 “ this duty they are indispensably obliged by their
 “ providential exemption from work of a harder
 “ kind. It is the proper business of the station
 “ which is allotted them in Christ’s household. And
 “ deep will be their shame, and insupportable their
 “ punishment, if, in the great day of reckoning,
 “ it should appear that they have received the
 “ wages of a service which hath never been per-
 “ formed.”

If, Sir, you read the above as often as you ought
 to do, you will never, in this very critical situation,
 when the enemy is at every gate, and scaling every
 rampart of your old and ruinous fortress, indulge
 yourself in your *soft couch of preferment*, but, together
 with your brethren, exert yourself *pro aris et focis*.

VII.

You say, p. 78, that, “ as you consider this con-
 “ troversy as resembling a state of war, in which no
 E “ quarter

“quarter is to be given, or accepted, you think
“yourself at liberty to strike at your enemy without
“remorse, in whatever quarter you may perceive an
“opening.” This fell language may well make me
shudder at my situation, especially as, in my *large*
work, at this very time probably in your cruel and
remorseless hands, there must be many openings,
and your vigilance in discovering them cannot be
doubted. I trust, however, that though you may
draw *blood* in many places, you will not be able to
reach any vital part. Out of eighteen hundred re-
ferences, I will gladly compound for eighteen being
found defective, when, of no more than *five* in this
performance of yours, not one proves to be to your
purpose.

As you have apprized me of your resolution to
strike at me without remorse, wherever you can
find an opening, I may presume that the parts at
which you have aimed your *remorseless blows*, are
all that you thought vulnerable. But, Sir, you are
not skilful in the art of tormenting, and, like the
Indian warrior, I will teach you how you might
wound me much more deeply.

Your chief wish is evidently to represent me as an
enemy to the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of
this country. Now had you been better *redde* in my
writings (but they are happily too voluminous for
you to *look through*) you might have found passages
more to your purpose than any that you have se-
lected. You have gone back as far as the year

1769, but you have overlooked the *Sermon* which I preached on resigning my pastoral office at Leeds, in 1773, one paragraph from which I shall insert for your use on another occasion.

“ All who are interested in the support of these
 “ antichristian establishments, which usurp an undue
 “ authority over the consciences of men, and whose
 “ wealth and power are advanced by them, are *at*
 “ *this very time* in a state of general consternation,
 “ both at home and abroad ; seeing their principles
 “ and maxims universally decried, and their unjust
 “ claims assailed from a great variety of quarters,
 “ so that *their kingdom is now full of darkness, and*
 “ *they are gnawing their tongues for pain, but with-*
 “ *out repenting of their deeds.*” Rev. xvi. 10,
 &c. &c. &c.

VIII.

As you talk, p. 15, of “ culling the flowers of
 “ my composition,” I shall, in return, present you
 with some of your own. If they please so much
 when separate, what must be their beauty and fra-
 grance when united ?

“ Insufficient antagonist, p. 1 ; confident igno-
 “ rance, fiery resentment, violent invective, and
 “ fierceness of wrath, p. 2 ; incompetency in the
 “ subject, fraudulent trick, meant to be put upon
 “ the public, but not on Dr. Horsley, p. 9 ; unfi-
 “ nished erudition, shallow criticism, weak argu-
 “ ment, unjustifiable art to cover the weakness, and
 “ supply the want of argument, p. 13 ; the vain in-
 E 2 “ dignant

“dignant struggle of a strong animal which feels
 “itself overcome, the mere growling of the tyger in
 “the toils, p. 14 ; a never to be forgotten attempt
 “upon a passage in St. John’s first epistle, p. 18* ;
 “a professor of Greek, unqualified to teach the
 “elements of that language, p. 34 ; a false and
 “fraudulent representation of an argument, p. 42 ;
 “precipitance in assertion, and talent in accommo-
 “dating his story to his opinion, p. 43 ; one in-
 “stance out of a great number, of his shameless in-
 “trepidity in assertion, p. 47 ; enraged heresiarch,
 “p. 51 ; prudence in not yet declaring his anti-
 “pathy to the civil as well as ecclesiastical consti-
 “tution of this country, p. 79 ; declaiming in his
 “conventicle to enlighten the minds, and excite the
 “zeal of the mechanics of the populous town of
 “Birmingham, p. 81 ; the excessive admiration in
 “which I hold myself, p. 86 ; unjust claim to the
 “titles of a good christian, or good subject,
 “p. 87, &c. &c. &c.”

In connexion with this, let the reader now see
 what you say, p. 8. “If on any branch of chris-
 “tian duty my conscience be at perfect ease, the
 “precept *judge not* is that which I trust I have not

* Referring to a supposed attempt to impose upon my read-
 ers, by a false quotation of the common English version of the
 bible. A man really capable of *this*, could only be fit for Bed-
 lam or Tyburn ; and yet Dr. Horsley, in the very publication in
 which he advanced that charge, said my “virtues were great
 “and amiable ;” as evident a contradiction as the doctrine of
transubstantiation, or *the trinity*. But as *these* have been be-
 lieved, so may the other.

“trans-

“transgressed;” and p. 87, “From my youth up, I have been averse to censorious judgment.” Who then, Sir, can deny that an excess of meekness and moderation forms the leading feature in your character?

Having taken from me every moral quality, all knowledge of human nature, history, logic, and every thing requisite to qualify me for the controversy in which I have had the presumption to engage, together with the very elements of the Greek language, and even of Latin, I think myself happy that, having asserted your own right to all virtue, and all knowledge, you have not yet expressly denied my ability to write a little tolerably intelligible English, and I shall endeavour to make the best use that I can of it, before the fatal day shall come when I may be stripped of *this* also.

But, dropping this style, I must on one subject be a little serious with you. You say, p. 71, that I have charged you with *gross and wilful misrepresentation*. This I deny; and if I have inadvertently said any thing that implies as much, I shall publicly ask your pardon. I must, therefore, insist upon your making good this accusation. You repeatedly charge *me* with wilful misrepresentation, but I doubt not you really believe me to be that fraudulent and base character, which alone is capable of such conduct, and therefore you say no worse of me than you really believe. I do not think so ill of you, and therefore I do not use that language in

speaking of you. I have, indeed, called you a *falsifier of history*, because you have added, and (as you now acknowledge) *knew* that you added to the accounts of ancient historians. But then you really believed that the transactions passed as you related them, and that the particulars which you *added* had been *omitted* by the early writers. This is far short of a *wilful lie*. After what I had written on this subject, in my eighteenth letter to you, I am surprised that you should write as you do now. How different must be your feelings from mine.

The *conclusion* of your remarks, which is so little of a piece with the body of the work, that it puts me in mind of the introduction to Horace's art of Poetry*, is something extraordinary, and indeed, shocking. After ascribing to me the worst designs, and the worst passions, that can occupy the head or heart of man, and for once intimating the possibility of something wrong lurking unperceived in your own bosom, speaking of the awful solemnities of the last day, you express a desire that "whatever of
" intemperate wrath, and carnal anger, has mixed
" itself on either side with the zeal with which we
" have pursued our fierce contention, may then be
" forgiven to us both; a prayer," you say, "which
" you breathe from the bottom of your soul," and

* Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas,
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne;
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?

to which you add, that if *I* have any part in the spirit of a christian, I shall, on my bended knees, say, Amen.

Which of us has been actuated by the bad spirit which you describe, our readers will infer, not from the declarations of either of us, but from our general temper, conduct, and manner of writing. If *I* be the man you describe, I can have no hope of forgiveness at the awful period to which you refer, unless I repent and reform *now*. If, contrary to the solemn declaration of your perfect innocence, quoted above, you had, when you wrote this *conclusion*, a latent suspicion that all had not been right on your side, you certainly, Sir, ought to have paused, have carefully revised what you had written, and have expunged what you could not approve. Boasting of more christianity than you will allow to me, you ought to teach me, by your example, what it is that our religion requires in these cases, and not give any occasion to an unauthorized teacher in a conventicle, to instruct an Archdeacon of the church of England in one of the first lessons in the christian school.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

E 4

Remarks on Mr. Howes's Ninth Number of Observations on Books ancient and modern.

IN Mr. Howes I have a much more respectable, and a somewhat more temperate antagonist than the Archdeacon of St. Albans; but I am sorry to find, that he has employed his ingenuity and learning (or, to use a favourite phrase of his his own, his *talent of disputation*) where neither of them can possibly avail him; the former in exculpating himself from the charge of representing me as an unbeliever, and the latter, in attempting to prove that the body of the Jews expected a God in their Messiah,

I do not rest my accusation on the construction of particular words and phrases, though that would abundantly justify it. Let any man of common sense read his Discourse, and then say, whether one great object of it was not to represent me as one of that class of persons, who having formerly been professed unbelievers in christianity, on finding that ground untenable, now only *pretend* to believe it, calling themselves *rational christians*, when in reality they are no christians at all. He has no occasion to have recourse to his Dictionary for the meaning of the word *pretend*.
Does

Does any man ever content himself with saying of another, that he *pretends* to a particular character, if he really thinks that he *has* a just claim to it? I say of Mr. Gibbon, that he pretends to be a believer in christianity; but then I mean what, if I use that language at all, I ought to mean, viz. that he *only pretends* to believe it, while he is artfully endeavouring to sap the very foundations of it. The same is the natural inference from all that Mr. Howes had said with respect to me.

If Mr. Howes really thinks me to be a believer in christianity, as he now says, it would much better have become him, ingenuously to acknowledge his fault, and to ask pardon for it. At present his apology only aggravates his offence. However, it affects himself only, and not me. We have one common master and judge, who knows both what he really intended by his account of me, and what I am; and by his sentence, and not by that of Mr. Howes, I shall stand or fall.

As to Mr. Howes's attempt, in this publication, to prove that the body of the Jewish nation really believed in the pre-existence and divinity of their Messiah, it must appear perfectly futile to any person who shall read what they will find, on that subject in my *History of early opinions concerning Christ*. He will there find that even the christian Fathers, eager as they were to press the *Jewish scriptures*

scriptures into the service of the doctrine of the trinity, did not pretend to have the body of the *Jewish nation* on their side. And would not they have been as glad as Mr. Howes now appears to be, to have found that belief among them? What some particular Jewish cabbalists (whose writings are remarkable for their ænigmatical obscurity) may have said, in a later period, is nothing to the purpose. To prove the easy reception of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ in the primitive times, Mr. Howes must find the doctrine of the divinity of the Messiah to have been the general belief of the Jewish nation in the age of the apostles. The opinion of such a Platonist as Philo, if we could be sure of it, can never pass for that of the Jewish nation in general, who certainly were not Platonists. Josephus is at least as good an authority as Philo; but is it probable that the Jewish nation, or the Pharisees in general, were believers in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, though this writer says they were? Josephus himself, and a few others, might believe that doctrine; and, from a natural bias to add to the respectability of our own party, he might give that representation of the faith of his sect in general. But Philo does not say that the Jews in general interpreted the scriptures as he did.

In my History Mr. Howes will find the most express testimony, that the Jews, in every age, from our Saviour's time to the present, were believers in the simple humanity of their Messiah.

The

The learned of that nation have always laughed at the pretence of orthodox christians to prove that their ancestors ever believed any thing else. Let Mr. Howes get acquainted with any learned Jews in this country, and they will give him the satisfaction they have given me on this subject. And is it not more likely that they should know the real sentiments of their countrymen, and of their own writers, with which they are continually conversant, than we can pretend to be? They give me the strongest assurances that the belief of their Messiah being a God, or that he pre-existed, neither is now, nor ever was, the faith of any of their countrymen. On the contrary, they hold these doctrines in the greatest abhorrence. Since this was indisputably the case, both in the time of the christian Fathers and at present, let Mr. Howes shew in which of the middle ages that doctrine was first introduced, how far it spread, and when it was deserted by them. Let him first answer what the learned Basnage, who was a trinitarian, has written on the subject, and then I will consider his arguments.

I am indeed astonished that neither Dr. Horsley, nor Mr. Howes, should so much as mention the name of *Basnage* in treating of this subject, which he has so learnedly and so ably discussed, and who has so particularly considered what *Cudworth*, *Allix*, and *Bull* had advanced upon it. The character of Mr. Basnage, in Moreri's Dictionary

tionary, by Le Clerc, is as follows: "Monsieur
 " Basnage étoit vrai jusques dans les plus petites
 " choses. Sa candeur, sa franchise, sa bonne foi,
 " ne paroissent pas moins dans ses ouvrages, que
 " la profondeur de son erudition." What will fo-
 reigners say of Englishmen still retailing the stale
 arguments of the three writers above mentioned,
 without any notice of what has been replied to
 them by such a man as this? Notwithstanding
 the acknowledged excellence of his character,
 there will be nothing extraordinary in Dr. Horf-
 ley's representing him as a *wilful liar*. If any
character could have been a security against such
 gross insult, it would have been that of Origen.

I am not much acquainted with the Jewish cab-
 balists, except through the medium of Basnage
 and others, and therefore will not answer for the
 meaning of the writer Mr. Howes quotes, though
 it is of no signification what his meaning was; but
 of Philo I have some knowledge; and his mean-
 ing, I am confident, Mr. Howes has most grossly
 mistaken. Referring to that passage in Philo,
 which will be found in my History, vol. 2. p. 8,
 he says, p. 46, that "the chief, or most ancient
 " logos (as Philo expresses himself) is likewise
 " sometimes mentioned by him as being actually
 " *resident* in the high priest of the Jews, and even as
 " being the *very same* person with the high priest,
 " as if they were blended into a compound indi-
 " vidual; in consequence of which the high
 " priest

“ priest is there spoken of, and declared to be no
 “ longer *a man*,——and of this divine logos he
 “ says also, that he dwells in God. He goes on
 “ to describe this divine logos, thus united to the
 “ high priest, as having had God for his father,
 “ and as being anointed with oil at his genera-
 “ tion, or first government. Since then, p. 49,
 “ Philo here ranked the high priest as being the
 “ the same with the divine logos, and in another
 “ place calls the divine logos a high priest, and
 “ conceives them capable of forming a compound
 “ individual, it is plain that the popular theology
 “ had no objection to a similar compound, form-
 “ ed out of the divine logos and a human Mes-
 “ siah; descended from David; which union they
 “ would naturally signify under the idea of the
 “ latter being *anointed Christ*, who would conse-
 “ quently be then no longer considered as *mere*
 “ *man*.”

Now, nothing can be more evident, even to a no-
 very sagacious reader, than that Philo, in this pas-
 sage, is merely indulging himself in one of his ex-
 travagant allegorical interpretations of scripture;
 supposing that what Moses says concerning the *high*
priest was not to be understood of any *man*, but of
 the *Platonic divine logos*. This writer abounds in
 such ridiculous interpretations of scripture, and in
 them he was too readily followed by the christian
 Fathers. But Mr. Howes's interpretation of Philo
 is more extraordinary than Philo's interpretation
 of

of Moses. Besides, can this same divine *logos* have a proper *bypostatical union* with the Jewish high priest (probably every Jewish high priest) and with Jesus the son of Mary? What a strange system will this make?

Mr. Howes's construction of the passage, which he has quoted from Tertullian, p. 13, is no less wide of his purpose. But I shall not enlarge upon this topic till I see how Mr. Howes will acquit himself with respect to what he has engaged to do.

If any man can read the evidence that I have produced in my History, in favour of unitarianism having been the original faith of the christian church, the acknowledgments of the orthodox fathers, that this doctrine was so prevalent among both the Jews and gentiles, that it required the greatest caution in the apostles to teach them any more sublime doctrine, that the doctrines of the divinity and pre-existence of Christ were not taught with clearness and effect, except by John at the time of the publication of his Gospel, after that of the three others; that the common people, who were unitarians, were extremely shocked at the first proposal of the doctrine of the trinity in a later period; though, after this, the trinitarians expressed great contempt and dislike of the unitarian doctrine*, &c. &c. &c. and yet maintain that there

* That the unitarians were at first considered as no heretics, and afterwards as heretics, Mr. Howes represents, p. viii. as

were no proper unitarians in the apostolic age, and that which immediately followed it, I shall think him capable of undertaking to prove that this country was not inhabited by Britons before the arrival of the Romans ; but that the Romans themselves were the Aborigines of the country.

We are promised, however, abundant evidence of this singular position ; and as Mr. Howes maintains, that those whom I have called *unitarians* in that age differed from the orthodox in nothing more than in supposing that the union of the divine and human nature in Christ commenced so late as his baptism, and not so early as at his conception, I take it for granted that we shall find this mighty difference of opinion distinctly marked by many of the ancient writers, and reasons given why this difference with respect to a *date* only, was considered as of so much consequence. For that the difference was *thought* to be considerable, and especially that the orthodox doctrine was thought to be much more *difficult* and *sublime* than the other, is too evident to be denied. Now I should think that it was quite as difficult to conceive of this hypostatical union taking place in a man full grown, as in an embryo in the womb. But Mr. Howes will certainly find *something* to say in sup-

“ an inconsistency above his comprehension.” How he can imagine this is above my comprehension. But we shall, probably, have sufficient opportunity of explaining ourselves.

port

port of so singular and favourite an hypothesis, as that which he has adopted; and I am willing to wait his time.

In the mean time it is a particular satisfaction to me that this discussion is at length undertaken by Mr. Howes, who is unquestionably a scholar, and who is at the same time so expeditious in his motions; as we shall now see all that *can* be produced against my argument, and the learned will not long be in suspense with respect to it. And then I hope it will appear that Mr. Howes is greatly mistaken in his assertion, that no good ever arose from controversy. But if that was his serious opinion, how can he justify himself in engaging in *this* controversy, in which he is entirely a volunteer, and how comes it that every thing that he has written is controversial? Both his *Observations on Books*, and his *Sermon*, are altogether such. Much as I have written in controversy, from the fullest conviction of the utility of it (which at least justifies me to myself) the far greater part of my publications are of a different nature.

THE END.

A
R E P L Y
TO THE
ANIMADVERSIONS
ON

The History of the Corruptions
of Christianity,

IN THE
MONTHLY REVIEW FOR JUNE, 1783;
WITH
ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

RELATING TO
The Doctrine of the Primitive Church, con-
cerning the Person of CHRIST.

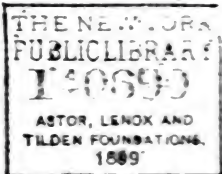
By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

*Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and
considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*
Matt. vii. 3.

BIRMINGHAM:

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[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]



P R E F A C E.

I SHALL be censured by many persons for taking this public notice of an *anonymous*, and especially a *periodical* publication; and what I hope to shew is, indeed, *in itself*, unworthy of any notice. But a wise man will consider things not so much as they are in themselves, as according to their power of doing good or harm. Now it cannot be denied that the *Monthly Review* is, in general, a respectable publication of its kind; and from the credit which it has acquired it has considerable influence; so that as nothing is exempt from plausible mis-representation, any writer has it in his power, with this advantage, materially to hurt the credit, and impede the sale of the most valuable productions.

I am sensible that a writer best consults his *dignity* by keeping silence on these occasions, and his regard for truth may be satisfied by correcting in a subsequent edition the errors of a former one. But my object, I hope, is not reputation (I write a great deal too much for that) but the careful investigation, and the most effectual propagation of truth; and for this purpose, I am willing to lay hold of every fair opportunity of bringing it again and again before the public.

I shall even rejoice in my own mistakes and oversights, if they should be the means of drawing more attention to any valuable subject of inquiry. Every person who writes on any side of the question helps to keep up that attention, and by this means the truth will, in the end, be a gainer. This, however, is the first, and it will probably be the last time that (if I be now doing wrong) I shall offend in this way.

I have not been without similar provocation to take the same method of redress before : but besides that the objects were of less consequence, the slow but sure decision of time (notwithstanding the Reviewer had the advantage of the popular clamour against me) has done me sufficient justice. My *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* being, in my own opinion, as well as that of my friends, of more value than most of my other publications, this piece of justice was thought to be due to it in preference to any of the rest ; and the knowledge and ability of the present Reviewer makes him a much more formidable, and therefore a more respectable antagonist.

The manner in which this review of my work is conducted, must necessarily give a very unfavourable idea of it to those who have no other source of information concerning it. They must think it to be not only full of the grossest blunders, but even calculated to deceive the reader. It is, moreover, written in a *tone* that cannot fail to impose upon many. I know that it has done
so,

P R E F A C E. v.

fo, and I am likewise well aware that the injury I have received does not admit of any adequate redress; since for one person who will see my defence, a hundred will see the accusation only. But I shall have done my duty with respect to the public, and to a work that was sincerely intended to be useful to them, by endeavouring to exhibit to the *few* to whom I may have access, how little there sometimes is in the most specious and the most arrogant reviews of books. This may also put them on their guard with respect to similar reviews of other works; and the judgment of the impartial *few* may, at length, influence the less discerning *many*.

My criticiser, feeling the advantage of his situation, may avail himself of it, and reply in the same plausible and insufficient manner. However, having done thus much, I think I may be excused from proceeding any farther in this way; and for the future content myself with correcting any real oversights which this, or any other writer, shall convince me that I have made. This I shall certainly do the first proper opportunity; and for this, I am confident, the public, before whom I say it, will give me credit.

As I make this remonstrance under so great disadvantage, I think I may require, that if my critic should not chuse to meet me on even ground, that is, in a separate pamphlet, he should, at least, give his name; and indeed he

has virtually engaged to do so, by saying †, “ If
 “ Dr. Priestley can fairly acquit himself of every
 “ charge of mis-construction, and mistake, we
 “ will acknowledge the injustice of these ani-
 “ madversions. And if we are convicted of
 “ mis-construction, mis-representation, or mis-
 “ take, we will *kiss the rod*.” For it is quib-
 ling with the public to talk of *kissing the rod*,
 and at the same time intending to remain an-
 onymous. And I think he will hardly say,
 after reading my reply, and recrimination, that
 he has been guilty of *no* misconstruction, *no* mis-
 representation, *no* mistake; not to say that exag-
 geration of real errors requires acknowledgment,
 as well as misrepresentations and mistakes. In
 all these respects, I challenge my critic to be as
 ingenuous as myself.

It may be said that I ought, at least, to have
 waited till the review of my work was closed.
 But I do not know when that will be; and be-
 sides the Reviewer has said ‡, “ We shall, in an-
 “ other article, give a general review of Dr.
 “ Priestley’s work, and leave animadversions to
 “ others.” I chuse, therefore according to the
 good old adage (of which I am seldom unmind-
 ful) not to leave that to the morrow which may
 as well be done to day.

What I advance in this publication is merely
 in my own defence, and without the least inten-

† P. 525. ‡ P. 526.

P R E F A C E. vii

tion of hurting the Monthly Review. But I must observe, in general, that repeated misrepresentations of works in which the public shall hereafter discern real merit, notwithstanding such attempts to overbear it, will necessarily bring any publication of the kind into discredit with men of sense and candour.

I will venture to say that no work of any extent will bear to be treated as this of mine has been, viz. by exhibiting its supposed defects only, without mentioning any one thing with respect to its *object*, or *execution*, that is praiseworthy, or even right. Had my *History of Electricity* been reviewed in the same captious manner, it might have been with the same effect. I do not charge this writer with any want of *learning* or *ability*. In those respects he may be much my superior, but with a want of that *candour* without which there can be no true judgment of the real value of any work of *man*. And we have no *angels* either to write books, or to review them.

The reader will also, I hope, consider, that oversights and mistakes which are venial in the compiler of a large systematical work, are unpardonable in one who voluntarily steps forth with no other view than to criticise and discredit it.

This business will not, I hope, be without some advantage; as besides the *Additional Observations* it has led me to make, relating to the state of antient opinions concerning the person of Christ

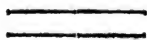
VIII. P R E F A C E

Christ in this pamphlet (and to which what there is in it relating to myself, and my own just defence, bears but a small proportion) it may lead to a fuller discussion of the subject. And I now profess, that in the same full and friendly manner in which I engaged with Dr. Price on the subjects of *Materialism* and *Necessity*, and with the Bishop of Waterford, on that of the *Duration of our Saviour's ministry*, I am ready to enter, with any person of learning and ability, upon the discussion of *the state of opinions concerning Christ, antecedent to the council of Nice*. My present ideas on the subject are clearly expressed, p. 34 of this pamphlet; but I shall be ready to retract whatever I shall be proved to have advanced too hastily and inconsiderately, and I will heartily join with my opponent in searching it to the bottom. I wish only for a fair and generous antagonist; and this for the sake of keeping close to the serious argument, in which alone the public is interested.

I consider this kind of controversial writing as of singular use, and I reflect upon my former publications of this kind with much satisfaction, as containing as free and as full a discussion of several important subjects as was ever given to the public.

I am the more at liberty for this investigation as Mr. Gibbon has absolutely declined to discuss with me, as I proposed to him, the *historical evidences of Christianity*: and bishop Hurd has

has not thought proper to take any notice whatever of what I addressed to him on the subject of the reformation of church *establishments*.



As I find it has been supposed, much to my prejudice, that in my late situation I was engaged as a *party writer*, I shall take this opportunity of saying, that I never wrote a political pamphlet, or a political paragraph all the time that that connection subsisted, nor was I ever requested so to do. It would have been a violation of the most essential article on which that connection was formed. *How*, or *why*, it was dissolved, about which there have been many surmises, concerns no persons but the parties themselves.

Birmingham, July 21, 1783.

C O N T E N T S.

S E C T I O N I.	PAGE.
<i>Of the Nazarenes, Ebionites, and Alogi,</i>	— 3

S E C T I O N II.	
<i>Of the inference from Hegesippus,</i>	— 8

S E C T I O N III.	
<i>Of what may be inferred from Justin Martyr concerning the state of opinions in his time,</i>	14

S E C T I O N IV.	
<i>Of the quotation from Eusebius; and Tertullian's account of the antient Unitarians, more particularly considered,</i>	— — 21

S E C T I O N V.	
<i>Of my being charged with advancing that Justin Martyr was the first that started the notion of Christ's pre-existence,</i>	— — 31

S E C T I O N VI.	
<i>Of the doctrine of the miraculous conception,</i>	39

S E C T I O N VII.	
<i>Miscellaneous Articles,</i>	— — 43
<i>Conclusion,</i>	— — 47

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

IN the preface to my late *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, I observed*, that “in a subject so copious as this, I am far from supposing it probable that I have made no mistakes, notwithstanding I have used all the care and precaution that I could. If any such be pointed out to me, whether it be by a friend or an enemy, I shall be glad to avail myself of the intimation, in case there should be a demand for a second edition.”

I now sit down to fulfil this promise, even before that demand be made, that I may give the earliest proof of my attachment to truth, and of my readiness to correct any oversight that I may have been guilty of. But those which I have hitherto been convinced of are so very few, and so very inconsiderable (not in the least affecting my main object, or any one position or argument of moment in it) that this early appearance before the public requires an apology, and this is two - fold : first, to answer some plausible charges of much greater errors and imperfections, but chiefly to take this opportunity of advancing some *additional observations* in support of one principal object in my work ; which was to produce evidence in favour of the doc-

* Page 20.

trine of the proper and simple humanity of Christ having been the original belief of both the Jewish and Gentile churches.

After an introduction calculated to turn my attempt into ridicule, the writer of the *Monthly Review* for June 1783, says, "Dr. Priestley's own sentiments on this subject," (meaning the Socinian*) "are well known, and if repetition could enforce conviction, he would long ere now, have seen the wishes of his heart accomplished." I do own that I have no wish nearer to my heart than this, arising from the fullest persuasion, that such, and such only, is the doctrine of the scriptures concerning Christ; that every thing that has been added to the primitive idea of the nature of Christ, has been derived from the vain imaginations of speculative but inconsiderate men; who did not reflect that the proper glory of Christ is his being the messenger of God, speaking and acting by him; and who by giving him a divine and super-angelic nature, have raised such difficulties to the reception of the gospel by Jews, Mahometans, and Heathens, as can never be removed but by going back to the primitive faith on this subject.

Disagreeable as this publication must, from the nature of it, be to me, I rejoice that it

* P. 516.

gives me another opportunity of bearing my testimony to the great and important truth of the proper humanity of Christ, commonly called Socinianism, though I am far from considering myself as being what this writer calls me, *its great advocate*. There is another person who has borne a very different, and a much more powerful kind of testimony to it, than any that I have done; and on this account I shall always honor him as the *first Socinian*, and I will add *one of the first Christians*, of this age and country.

I shall now proceed to mention all the mistakes, with which I have been charged, and shall with great frankness plead *guilty* wherever I do not feel myself innocent.

S E C T I O N I.

Of the Nazarenes, Ebionites, and Alogi.

I AM told*, that “ Toland, the infidel, in
 “ his *Nazarenus* (so well answered by
 “ Mosheim) has laboured to prove that the Na-
 “ zarenes and Ebionites were the same class of
 “ christians, and the true original believers in
 “ Jesus”.

This piece of Toland’s I do not recollect to have seen, nor have I ever met with Mosheim’s

* P. 516.

answer to it; but the opinion of Mr. Toland that the Nazarenes and Ebionites were the same people, is maintained by Le Clerc and other eminent critics, so that few persons at this time, have, I believe, much doubt on the subject. It must, I think, be right for this obvious reason, viz. that their peculiar opinions are represented by the most respectable authorities as the very same; only some have thought that the Nazarenes believed the miraculous conception, and the Ebionites not. But Epiphanius says*, he does not know whether the Nazarenes believed Christ to be a mere man, or to have had a miraculous conception; and the Ebionites are expressly described both by Origen and Eusebius as consisting of *two sorts*, one of which held that Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary, and the other that his conception was miraculoust. Epiphanius also expressly says†, that Ebion, (whom he took to be the father of the Ebionites) held the same opinion with the Nazarenes. I also think it may be clearly inferred from Jerom's Epistle to Austin§, that the *Ebionites*, the *Minei*, and the *Nazarenes*, were all the same people.

How then have I been so "precipitate," as this writer says I have been, "in con-

* Har. 29, Sec. 7, Opera, vol. 1, p. 123.

† See Origen contra Celsum, lib. 5, p. 272. In Matt. Tract. 13, Cap. 20, Opera, vol. 2, p. 88. Eusebii Hist. Eccles. lib. 3, Cap. 27, p. 121.

‡ Har. 30, Sect. 1, vol. 1, p. 125.

§ Ep. 89, Tom. 1, p. 634.

cluding

“cluding that the Nazarenes and Ebionites
 “were the same people?” He says, “we have
 “strong reason to suppose that the early mem-
 “bers of both sects differed considerably in
 “articles of faith.” I can only say that I
 should be glad to see, and have an oppor-
 tunity of examining, this *strong reason*.

This writer wishes to know in what part
 of Origen's works I find any mention of the
 Nazarenes. I answer that as he describes the
 opinions of the Ebionites as being the same
 with those which others ascribe to the Naza-
 renes, he sufficiently appears to have had no
 idea of any difference between them; but I
 own I expressed myself rather incorrectly, when
 I said he *acknowledged* that there was no dif-
 ference between them. Tillemont says, that
 Origen seems to have confounded the two
 sects §, so that his expression is pretty nearly
 the same with my own.

No person, I think, can reflect upon this
 subject with proper seriousness, without thinking
 it a little extraordinary, that the Jewish christians,
 in so early an age as they are spoken of, should
 be acknowledged to believe nothing either of
 the divinity, or even of the pre-existence of
 Christ, if either of those doctrines had been
 taught them by the apostles. Could they so

§ Memoires, vol. 4, p. 192.

soon have deserted so important an article of their faith, and so lately *delivered to the Saints*; and, having once believed Christ to be either the supreme God, or a super-angelic spirit, have, contrary to the general propensity of human nature, which has always been to *aggrandize*, rather than to *degrade* a Lord and Master (because it is, in fact, to aggrandize themselves) come so generally, if not universally, to believe him to be nothing more than a mere man, and even the Son of Joseph and Mary?

That the *Alogi* were those Gentiles who held the same tenets with the Ebionites, or Nazarenes, among the Jews, is universally acknowledged. Athanasius represents all the Jewish believers as having held that Christ was only a man, and says that they drew the Gentiles into the same opinion; and this is mentioned by him not in controversy, but incidentally, though very much at large. It is, therefore, the more worthy of credit; and especially as he himself does not seem to have been aware of the very obvious inference that may be drawn from his concession. Accordingly, it is not denied that these *Alogi* were considered as part of the body of Gentile christians, without having ever been excommunicated; so that it is plain that they were not deemed heretics. A heretic the apostle

postle Paul says §, was to be *rejected after the first and second admonition*, and the early christians were but too ready to use, and to extend, any direction of this kind.

Let any person at all acquainted with the eager contentious spirit of those times, and particularly the attention that was universally given to every thing that favored of *heresy*, think, whether it be at all probable, that if the majority of christians in those days had held the doctrine of the divinity, or super-angelic nature of Christ, they would have suffered to continue in communion with them, persons who openly denied those favourite doctrines, and whose rise and progress they could easily trace. On the contrary, these early Unitarian christians were not only tolerated, but we find them mentioned with respect, and even apologies are made to them by those who held the doctrine of the Trinity; which appears to have shocked these Unitarians very much. But the generality of these Unitarians were what Tertullian calls *Idiotæ unlearned*, and therefore we have none of their complaints from themselves.

§ Tit. 3.10.

SECTION II.

Of the inference from Hegesippus.

I HAVE inferred from the silence of Hegesippus with respect to the Nazarenes or Ebionites, in his list of heretics, that he, being a Jewish christian, was one of them; and this is ascribed by my critic †, to my “*zeal to support a system at all hazards.*” This however, I cannot help thinking to be highly probable. He, being a Jewish christian himself, could not but be well acquainted with the prevailing opinions of the Jewish christians, the most conspicuous of which, it cannot be denied, was the opinion of Christ’s being a mere man. Now, can it be supposed that if he himself had been what is now called an orthodox christian, that is a Trinitarian, or even an Arian, he would have wholly omitted the mention of the Ebionites in any pretended list of heretics of his time, had it been ever so short a one, and this consists of no less than eleven articles? Also, can it be supposed that Eusebius, who speaks of the Ebionites with so much hatred and contempt, would have omitted to copy this article if it had been in the list; and yet my critic says, “how do we know that the Ebionites were

† P. 520.

“ omitted,

“omitted?” Their not being inserted in the list by such a person as Eusebius, must, I think, satisfy any person, who has no system to support, with respect to this article. A stronger negative argument can hardly be imagined. As to Hegesippus himself, we must judge of his feelings and conduct as we should of those of any person at this day in a situation similar to his. Now did any subsequent ecclesiastical historian, or did any modern divine of the orthodox faith, ever omit Arians or Socinians, or names synonymous to them (who always were, and still are in the highest degree obnoxious to them) in a list of heretics?

Had the faith of the early christians been either that Christ was true and very God, or a super-angelic spirit, the maker of the world, and of all things visible and invisible under God, and had Hegesippus himself retained that faith, while the generality, or only any considerable number of his countrymen had departed from it, it could not but have been *upon his mind*, and have excited the same indignation that the opinions of the Arians and Socinians excite in the minds of those who are called orthodox at this day. Nay, in his circumstances, such a defection from that important article of faith in his own countrymen, after having been so recently taught the contrary by the apostles themselves, whose writings they still had with them, must have
excited

excited a much greater degree of surprize and indignation than a similar defection would have occasioned in any other people, or in any later times.

Lastly, Hegesippus quoting the same gospel that was in use among the Ebionites, might also have been alledged as a presumption that he was one of them.

My opponent says †, “ It is as remarkable that Hegesippus should have omitted the Cerinthians as the Ebionites.” How differently do we judge of things being *remarkable*, or *extraordinary*. I see nothing at all extraordinary in the omission of the Cerinthians in this list of heretics by Hegesippus; as they were only one branch of the Gnostics, several of whom are in his list; and it is not improbable that these Cerinthians having been one of the earliest branches might have been very inconsiderable, perhaps extinct in his time; I do not know that they are mentioned by any antient writer as existing so late as the time of Hegesippus; and as they seem to have been pretty much confined to some parts of Asia Minor, and especially Galatia, which was very remote from the seat of the Ebionites, they might never have extended so far; and therefore he might not have heard much about

† P. 520.

them

them. Whereas the Ebionites were at that very time in their full vigor, and though their opinions (being then almost universal in what was called the catholic church) had not begun to give offence, they were afterwards the object of the most violent hatred to the other christians, and continued to be so as long as they subsisted.

That Hegesippus, though an Unitarian himself, should speak as he does of the state of opinions in the several churches which he visited, as then retaining the right faith, is, I think, very natural. The only heresy that disturbed the apostle John, and therefore other Jewish christians in general, was that of the Gnostics; and almost all the eleven different kinds of heresies, enumerated by this writer are probably only different branches of that one great heresy. If, therefore, the churches which he visited were free from Gnosticism, he would naturally say that they retained the right faith. For as to the doctrine of the *personification of the Logos*, held then by Justin Martyr, and perhaps a few others, it was not, in its origin, so very alarming a thing; and very probably this plain man had not at all considered its nature and tendency.

He, as an Unitarian, believed that all the extraordinary power exerted by Christ was that of the Father residing in him, and speaking and acting by him; and he might
 imagine

imagine that these philosophising christians, men of great name, and a credit to the cause, held in fact the same thing, when they said that this Logos of theirs was not the Logos of the Gnostics, but that of John the Evangelist, or the wisdom and power of God himself. And though this might appear to him as a thing that he could not well understand, he might not think that there was any heresy, or much harm in it. Had he been told (but this he could only have had from inspiration) that this specious personification of the divine Logos would, about two centuries afterwards, end in the doctrine of the perfect equality of the Son with the Father, this plain good man might have been a little startled.

That Eusebius, and others, should speak of Hegesippus with respect (from which my critic argues*, that "he could not possibly have been an Ebionite,") appears to me nothing extraordinary, though it should have been known to them that he was one; considering that they quote him only as an *Historian*; and supposing what is very probable, that he did not treat particularly of doctrinal matters, but confined himself to the acts of the apostles, and other historical circumstances attending the propagation of the Gospel; especially as he

* P. 520.

was the only historian of that age, and had always been held in esteem. A man who is once in possession of the general good opinion will not be censured lightly, especially by such men as Eusebius. Can it be supposed also that Eusebius, in expressly quoting *antient authorities* against those who held the opinion of the simple humanity of Christ, would not have cited Hegesippus as well as Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and others; if he could have found any thing in him for his purpose? This may be considered as a proof that there was nothing in that work unfavourable to the doctrine of the Ebionites. A negative argument can hardly be stronger than this.

My critic calls the argument for Hegesippus being an Ebionite, from his omission of the Ebionites in his list of Jewish heretics, “*a weak and impotent conclusion* :” and because I insert it in my *Summary View* of the evidence for the primitive christians holding the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ; he says, “We are sorry to see a man of such superior qualifications reduced to an expedient so pre-
“carious as this.” Let the reader attend to the considerations I have now urged, and say whose conclusion is *weak and impotent*, mine that Hegesippus probably was one, or his that he *could not have been* an Ebionite. I shall continue this argument in my *summary view* till I see much better reason for displacing it.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of what may be inferred from Justin Martyr concerning the state of opinions in his time.

MY critic says ‡, “ Our greatest objection lies against Dr. Priestley’s representation of the opinion of Justin Martyr. He first translates a passage of that antient father’s writings in equivocal terms, and then draws a conclusion from it in direct opposition to its original design. Nor should I be prevailed upon by ever so many *οἱ πλείστοι* who hold that opinion. This Justin is made to say.”

Now I maintain that my translation of the passage, though not *literal*, is *just* and not in the least *equivocal*, and moreover it is, of the two, less favourable to my own purpose than his translation, viz. *the majority* of Christians; and therefore I could not possibly mean to take any unfair method in drawing my conclusion, whether on the whole, it be well or ill-founded. For certainly the phrase *ever so many*, carries the mind beyond the idea of a bare majority, viz. as nearly as possible to the whole number, leaving as few as any person pleases for the *some persons* *τινες*, who are opposed to the *ever so many*, or *majority*, *οἱ πλείστοι*.

Besides the critic, by considering the whole sentence as a conclusion from Justin†, mistakes the ground of my observation; imagining it is wholly founded on the quotation from that writer, whereas it is in part a probable opinion of *my own*. That the reader may judge for himself I shall here give the sentence intire.

“ This language has all the appearance of an
 “ apology for an opinion contrary to the general
 “ and prevailing one; as that of the humanity
 “ of Christ (at least with the belief of the
 “ miraculous conception) probably was in his
 “ time.” The latter part of the sentence is wholly my own; and not an inference from Justin, and it is an opinion for which I shall soon give sufficient reason.

It is enough for me if I do not misrepresent my author, by a wrong interpretation of his own words. As to the *ground*, or *colour* that there may be for my own observation, the reader must judge between us, and to this I have no objection. And indeed I am fully satisfied that the *τινες* or *some*, of Justin Martyr were in fact, the *πλειοστοι* or the majority, and I even think it not improbable, from the complexion of the sentence, that Justin might be aware that it might be objected to him, that even the majority of christians held an opinion different from his; and that with a view to this, he

† P. 512:

said that he should not be influenced by it, though it should be so.

Tertullian expressly says that it was the prevailing opinion fifty years after that, and it is well known that that doctrine kept losing, and not gaining ground, in all that period. According to him, it was held by the *idiota*, the common unlearned christians, who he says, are always the majority of believers (*quæ major semper credentium pars est.*)

Besides this direct testimony, the thing is highly probable from other considerations. If this had not been, at least, a very general opinion, it can hardly be supposed that any writer would have spoken of it with so much tenderness and respect as Justin has done, considering how very different it was from his own opinion, for which I still think that his language wears a sufficient appearance of an apology. He also seems to intimate, some degree of *doubt* with respect to his opinion; when he says that "if he should not be able to prove the *pre-existence* of Christ, the doctrine of his *Messiahship* would not be affected by it." Why should he provide this retreat, if he had no secret suspicion of the ground on which he stood?

If we consider the time in which Justin wrote, viz. about A. D. 140, that is about
eighty

eighty years after the time of the apostles, and compare with it the account that Athanasius gives us of the state of opinions among the Jews and Gentiles in their time, we can hardly doubt (whether Justin Martyr confesses it or not) that the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ *must* have been the prevailing one in his time. Athanasius says that the Jews, meaning the Jewish christians were so fully persuaded concerning the simple humanity of their Messiah, that the apostles did not chuse to inform them, except in an indirect manner (of which he gives many instances) that Christ was any thing more than a man, and that the Gentiles were drawn by the Jews into the same opinion.

Since, therefore, according to this most unexceptionable account, as it was only an *indirect evidence* of the divine or super-angelic nature of Christ that the Jewish christians (by whom the gospel was communicated to the Gentiles) were ever favoured with; can it be thought probable, so highly averse as the account itself states the Jews to have been to the idea of any super-human nature in Christ, that they should, by their own reasoning alone on the subject, have generally abandoned their favourite doctrine, in so short a time as fourscore years? Or if, from some most unaccountable cause, and without any person of great authority to lead them into it (for no such authority can we

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trace

trace) they should have abandoned their original and favourite doctrine, is it probable that they would have been so extremely active and successful in the propagation of their new opinion, and withall have found the Gentiles so very pliant, as to have been able to induce the generality of them to make the same change, when at the same time they are known to have had but little connexion, and indeed but little respect for each other? Is a period of eighty years a space naturally sufficient for these two successive changes?

But if we take in another well authenticated circumstance, we shall be obliged to reduce this short space (too short as it already is for the purpose) to one still shorter. Hegesippus, as explained by Valesius, in his notes on Eusebius's ecclesiastical history †, says, that the church of Jerusalem continued a virgin, or free from heresy, till the death of Simeon, who succeeded James the just, that is, till the time of Trajan, or about the year 100, or perhaps 110, for his reign began A. D. 98, and ended A. D. 117. Knowing, therefore, from other circumstances what this purity of christian faith was, and what Hegesippus must have known it to be, we have only the space of 40, or perhaps 30 years for so great a change. So

† Lib: 3, cap. 32, p. 128.

rapid

rapid at that particular period must have been that *movement*, which we find by experience to be naturally one of the very slowest in the whole system of nature, viz. the revolution of opinions in great bodies of men *. Can it then be thought probable that, considering the Jewish and Gentile christians as one body, the *generality* of them, the *οι πολλοι* should have abandoned the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ, in the time of Justin Martyr?

On the contrary, it is certainly not at all improbable that the more learned and philosophical of the christians, beginning to be ashamed of a crucified man for their saviour, and firmly believing the doctrine of the pre-existence of all souls, and of their descent into human bodies, should have begun to fancy that Christ must have had some origin superior to that of other men; that this should first of all produce the opinions of the Gnostics, who thought that the Christ, who came down from heaven, was quite distinct from the man Jesus, and felt nothing of his pains or sorrows; or that, these opinions being nearly exploded, the generality of christian teach-

* This is a *movement* which I could easily shew Mr. Gibbon, that he has not much studied, though it behoved him to have given the closest attention to it, preparatory to his account of the overthrow of paganism by the spread of christianity.

ers, or bishops (many of whom were educated in the Platonic school at Alexandria) should afterwards apply the Platonic doctrine of the *Logos* to the same subject, and that by their influence, opinions leading to the deification of Christ should gradually gain ground among the common people. But this must have been a work of time, so that the majority of christians could hardly have been infected with these principles so early as the time of Justin Martyr.

The philosophical christians, however, being the only writers whose works are extant, it is easy to account for our knowing no more than we do of the common people and their opinions, and that we are obliged to collect what we do know concerning them from *incidental circumstances*, as I have endeavoured to do. But these are often the least suspicious intimations of the real state of things. By such circumstances as these, the detail of which may be seen in my *History*, it will, I think, sufficiently appear, that it was with great difficulty that the generality of christians were reconciled to the doctrine of the deity of Christ, and that of a *Trinity*, in any form. As Tertullian expresses himself, they were at first exceedingly *scandalized* at it, holding firmly to their justly favourite doctrine of the supreme *monarchy of the Father*. This also sufficiently accounts for the great number of fol-
lowers,

lowers which ecclesiastical history gives to every person of learning who avowed the then popular opinion, as Artemon, Noetus, Sabellius, Paulus Samosatensis, and Photinus.

On the subject of this part of my accusation, which my critic says, is the greatest that he has to bring against me, I now appeal to the impartial reader; whether, instead of proving me to have misrepresented Justin Martyr, he has not misrepresented me, and also whether I have not brought sufficient evidence of the opinion I maintained, viz. that the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ was that which was most generally received in the time of Justin Martyr; and of this I shall produce more evidence in the next section.

S E C T I O N IV.

Of the quotation from Eusebius; and Tertullian's account of the antient Unitarians, more particularly considered.

MY criticiser says †, “ If Dr. Priestley will
“ turn to Eusebius, and read the chap-
“ ter with such deliberation as befits an histo-
“ rian writing on subjects of the greatest im-
“ portance, he will find that his charge of un-

† P. 523.

“fairness (even if it be true) is not to be applied to Eusebius, but to a more ancient writer, from whose book the transcript was made which has so highly offended Dr. Priestley.”

I have reperused this chapter of Eusebius, and do not think it quite clear that he is quoting the work of any prior writer in the passage that I have cited: for he sometimes only gives an account of the work, and not always expresses quotations from it; and he seems to me to insert observations of his own in what he does quote from this anonymous writer; so that, upon the whole, I am of opinion (though I may be mistaken) that Eusebius speaks in his own person in what I have quoted from him. However, it is sufficiently evident that he adopts the language, and makes himself answerable for it. Where then is the foundation for the tone in which the above remark is delivered?

I acknowledge however, that I should not have stopped at Justin Martyr, but have proceeded to mention the other authorities, quoted either by Eusebius, or his author. They are, however, of no sort of weight in the decision of the question, and all of them that are extant I had considered in the course of my work. There is no mention of the divinity of Christ in the first and only authentic epistle of Clemens*; it

* In the second section of this epistle we find the phrase *the sufferings of God*; but this is language so exceeding being

being only found in the second and undoubtedly spurious epistle, as I believe all the learned of this day consider it. Eusebius himself says †, “it is not so generally received as the former, nor do we know that the antients have quoted it.” He adds, that there were other later forgeries of writings in his name.

Also, though in some pretty ancient *hymns* Christ might be mentioned as *God*, yet being poetical compositions, it is most probable that it was only in some figurative and qualified sense, referring to the power and authority with which he was invested by God, as Moses is said to have been a God to Pharaoh. As to the authority of Pliny, if he had been told that hymns were sung by christians in honour of Christ, being himself a heathen, he would naturally imagine that they were such hymns as had been composed in honour of the heathen gods, who had been men. He would be far from concluding from that circumstance, that Christ was considered by his followers either as the supreme God, or as a pre-existent spirit, the maker of the world under God.

But I wish to proceed to considerations of more importance relating to this passage of Eu-

ingly shocking, and unscriptural, that it is hardly possible to think that it could be used by any writer so near to the time of the apostles; and Junius, who was far from having my objection to it, was of opinion that the whole passage was much corrupted, and that, instead of *παιδαγωγὸς αὐτοῦ* i. e. *Seu*, we ought to read *μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ*.

† Eccles. Hist. Lib. 3, Cap. 38, p. 134.

sebius, and to compare his account of the antiquity of the christian Unitarians, with their own account of themselves, to see which is in itself the more probable. He, or his author, says *, that Theodotus, who was condemned by Victor, was the author and parent of that sect; being the first who asserted that Christ was a mere man; and these Unitarians are even charged with *certainly knowing* that this was the case, which is directly giving them the lie; and yet this assertion of Eusebius is undoubtedly false, as appears on the full face of all ecclesiastical history, and, as I have said, it may be proved from Eusebius himself.

He certainly knew that Justin Martyr had not only mentioned Unitarians, but had treated them with much respect; and he speaks § of the Ebionites as cotermporaries of Cerinthus, who according to himself, lived in the time of the apostle John. By his own account, therefore, these Unitarians, who believed Christ to be a mere man, were cotermporary with the apostle John; who though greatly offended at *heresy*, takes no notice of their opinion being one. Nothing, therefore, can be more contrary to truth or probability, than the account of the origin of the Unitarians by Eusebius, or his author; and if I be offended at it, is it without a cause? And how

* Lib. 5, Cap. 28, p. 252.

§ Lib. 3, Cap. 27, 28, p. 121, &c.

can the Reviewer doubt of my charge of *unfairness* against Eusebius, or his author, being true? As to the *very early date* of this anonymous piece, see Lardner (Credibility, vol. 3, p. 36) who refers it to the year 212.

Let us now consider the account that these Unitarians, according to Eusebius, gave of themselves. They are said to have affirmed with confidence, that the apostles taught their doctrine, and that it was preserved till the time of Victor, or Zephyrinus. What they actually said, we do not know, but it could hardly be that there had been no innovation whatever in the doctrine concerning the person of Christ before the time of Victor; because the Gnostics are well known to have been a very numerous sect, consisting of many branches; and before this time Justin Martyr and others had published their account of the personification of the Logos. It is probable, therefore that what they really maintained was, that their doctrine was that which was most generally received till that time; and this I think to be highly probable, if not demonstrable.

According to all accounts, the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ was held by the Jewish christians in the time of the apostles. I do not find that any of them are ever expressly said to have held any other doctrine, only some of them believed the miraculous conception.

Athanasius

Athanasius clearly supposes none of them to have believed that Christ had any nature superior to that of man; and he says that they brought the Gentiles, meaning, no doubt, the generality of them, into the same opinion. This then may fairly be supposed to have been the state of things at the time that John wrote his first epistle, which was about the year 80, when it is plain from his own writings there was no opinion among christians that gave him any alarm, besides that of the Gnostics.

Taking it then for granted, that the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ was nearly, at least, universal in the year 80, is it at all probable, that it could have ceased to have been the prevailing doctrine before the time of Victor, about the year 200? Causes which tended to produce the opinion of the deity of Christ operated, no doubt, very powerfully; but still it cannot be thought probable, that they could have produced so great an effect in the space of little more than one century.

Another, and no inconsiderable argument in favour of the antiquity of the proper Unitarian doctrine among christians, may be drawn from the *rank* and *condition* of those who held it in the time of Tertullian, who lived about the time of Victor. He calls them *simplices et Idiotæ*, that is, *common or unlearned people*, and such persons are certainly most likely to retain old opinions, and are always far less apt to *innovate*, than the learned;

learned; because they are far less apt to speculate. Whenever we endeavour to trace the oldest opinions in any country, we always inquire among the *Idiotæ* the common people; and if they believe one thing, and the learned another, we may conclude with certainty, that, which ever of them be *true*, or the more probable, those of the common people were the more *ancient*, and those of the learned and speculative the more novel of the two.

In most cases the more novel opinions are more likely to be true, considering the gradual spread of knowledge, and the general prevalence of prejudice and error; but in some cases the probability is on the side of the more antient opinions; and it is evidently so in this. The true doctrine concerning the person of Christ must be allowed to have been held by the apostles. They, no doubt, knew whether their master was only a man like themselves, or their maker. Their immediate disciples would receive and maintain the same doctrine that they held; and it must have been some time before any other could have been introduced, and have spread to any extent, and especially before it could have become the prevailing opinion. We naturally, therefore, look for the *genuine* doctrine of christianity, concerning the person of Christ, among those who, from their condition and circumstances, were most likely to maintain the *old* opinion,

opinion, rather than among those who were most apt to receive a new one. Surely then we have a better chance of finding the truth on this subject among these *Idiota*, the common and unlearned people, than with such men as Justin Martyr, who had been a heathen philosopher, Irenæus, or any other of the learned and speculative christians of the same age.

On the contrary, supposing the christian religion to have been gradually corrupted, and that, in a long course of time, the corrupt doctrine should become the most prevalent among the common people, the reformation of it by the recovery of the genuine doctrine is naturally to be looked for among the learned and the inquisitive, who in all cases will be the innovators. This is remarkably the case in the present state of things. The common people in the Roman Catholic countries are bigots to the old established faith, while the learned are moderate, and almost protestants. In protestant countries the common people still adhere most strongly to the doctrines of their ancestors, or those which prevailed about the time of the reformation, while the learned are everywhere receding farther from them; they being more inquisitive, and more enlightened than the uninquiring vulgar. But still, if any man should propose simply to enquire what were the opinions most generally received in this country a century ago (which was about the
space

space that intervened between Victor and the time of the apostles) we should think him very absurd, if he should look for them among the learned, rather than among the common people. We have experience enough of the difficulty with which the bulk of the common people are brought to relinquish the faith of their ancestors.

Is it, then, at all probable - that when the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ is acknowledged to have been held by the *Idiotæ*, or *common people*, and who are expressly said to have been the *greater part* of the believers (*major credentium pars*) this should not have been the general opinion a century before that time, but on the contrary that of the deity of Christ, which was held by Tertullian, and other learned christians; and who speak of the common people as being *shocked* (*expavescunt*) at their doctrine? Sufficient cause may be assigned why the learned in that age should be inclined to adopt any opinion which would advance the personal dignity of their master, and the same causes would produce the same effect among the common people, but it would be more slowly, and require more time, as appears to have been the fact.

Let any person of common sense then judge between these antient Unitarians, with respect
to

to the probable account of their origin and antiquity, and Eusebius, or his author.

That Eusebius himself should take so violent a part as he always does against these ancient Unitarians, is not difficult to be accounted for. He himself was strongly suspected of Arianism, at a time in which the Athanasian doctrine was most prevalent, and though a learned man, he was not of the firmest tone of mind. In these circumstances, he would naturally make the most of such pretensions to orthodoxy as he had, and would be inclined to shew his zeal by invectives against those who were more heretical than himself. This we see illustrated every day. This was the cause why many of the reformers from popery joined with the papists in the persecution of those who were desirous of carrying the reformation a little farther than themselves. This might, in some, measure contribute to produce the zeal of the Calvinists against the Arminians, that of the Arminians against the Arians, that of the Arians against the Socinians, and that of Socinus himself against Francis David.

S E C T I O N V.

Of my being charged with advancing that Justin Martyr was the first who started the notion of Christ's pre-existence.

A NOTHER heavy charge advanced against me †, is, that I have asserted that "the notion of the pre-existence of Christ cannot be traced any higher than Justin Martyr." Now this is to all intents and purposes a mis-quotation, that part of the sentence which was necessary to give the true sense of what is quoted being omitted. It must, therefore, necessarily mislead the reader; and independently of that, it is a manifest misrepresentation of my opinion, not only simply mentioned, but frequently urged, and enlarged upon in the course of the work.

I have no where said that *simple pre-existence* was never ascribed to Jesus Christ before Justin Martyr. I must have been a child in ecclesiastical history, and shamefully inconsistent with myself, if I had said any such thing. The doctrine of the pre-existence was certainly that of the Gnostics in the time of the apostles themselves, and is always represented by me as such. What I say is that, "we find nothing like *divinity* ascribed to Christ before Justin Martyr;"

† P. 524.

and

and though, in one particular sentence, I mentioned *pre-existence*, as what we cannot with certainty trace any higher, it is in conjunction with *divinity* and not *separately*, as it is here exhibited. The whole sentence is as follows: "Whether Justin Martyr was the very first who started the notion of the pre-existence of Christ, and of his super-angelic or divine nature, is not certain, but we are not able to trace *it* any higher ‡. Had the disjunctive *or* been used instead of *and* (which would have implied that neither the opinion of the divinity, nor that of the pre-existence of Christ, were prior to Justin) a reader of common sense and candour would have seen that it must have been misprinted. My reference to both the opinions by the pronoun *it*, which is in the singular number, sufficiently shews that, however improper and unguarded the expression may happen to be, I could not really mean to consider the two opinions separately.

But my criticiser, instead of making any allowance for a casual ungrammatical construction, and of ascertaining my meaning by comparing one expression with another, has absolutely tortured my language, in order to make me contradict myself; and has even employed more than one page out of six only of his own composing to confute an opinion of which my history

‡ Vol. 1, p. 32.

itself is a much fuller refutation. This conduct admits of no apology even in a professed answerer of a book, and much less in a reviewer, who should exhibit a fair and impartial account of the work before him.

In another passage which this writer has not overlooked, for he has quoted it p. 518, though without any particular notice, I have evidently considered Justin Martyr's idea of pre-existence as one *species* of a *genus*. It is as follows* "This
" writer even speaks of his own opinion of the
" pre-existence of Christ (and he is the first that
" we certainly know to have maintained it *on the*
" *principles on which it was generally received*
" *afterwards*) as a doubtful one, and by no
" means a necessary article of christian faith." Here I evidently refer to his idea of the personification of the Logos of the Father, which was a *kind of pre-existence* quite distinct from that of the Gnostics, who preceded him. Let any one prove this opinion of the personification of the Logos to have been held by any person before Justin Martyr. If he can (and I have not expressed myself positively on the subject) he will still be far from proving that it was the doctrine of the apostles; and whether the innovation took place a little earlier, or a little later, it will make no difference with respect to my principal object.

• P. 17.

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As this mis-representation affects one principal part of the great outline of my work, I shall take this opportunity of drawing it more distinctly, for the benefit of my readers in general.

What I have maintained in my late *History of opinions concerning Christ*, and what I do not find to have been much, if at all, insisted upon before, is, that the exaltation of the person of Jesus Christ began with the Gnostics, who maintained the doctrine of the pre-existence of all human souls, as independent created spirits, capable of animating human bodies. This error began in the time of the apostles, and is known to be referred to by John. When this notion was exploded, another, which I cannot trace any higher than Justin Martyr, was adopted, and this was the *personification of the Logos* of the Father, which was a thing quite distinct from the doctrine of the Gnostics, so that the patrons of each were continually combating one another. The pre-existent spirits, or *Æons*, of the Gnostics were supposed to have existed an indefinite time before the creation of the world; whereas the personification of the Logos was represented, by the first advocates of it, as a thing that took place immediately before that event, and with a view to it. The peculiar doctrine of Arius was, in my opinion, clearly subsequent to this; and it was after them all that the personification

ification of the Logos, being carried farther back, namely to all eternity, led to the present doctrine of the Trinity, consisting of three persons in the Godhead, perfectly equal with respect to eternity, and all divine attributes.

Instead of holding out to the view of the readers this great outline of the first part of my work, on which alone he has descanted, my critic charges me with asserting that the simple pre-existence of Christ was not known before Justin Martyr; which shews that he never once formed a right conception of what he undertook to exhibit.

As to the epistles of Ignatius, I consider them all, the *less*, as well as the *greater*, as being either wholly spurious, or so corrupted, as not to be quoted with safety; and I am far from being original or singular in this opinion.

Dr. Lardner, who thinks that the smaller epistles are *in the main genuine*, says†, “ If there be only some few sentiments and expressions which seem inconsistent with the true age of Ignatius, it is more reasonable to suppose them to be additions, than to reject the epistles themselves entirely; especially in this scarcity of copies which we labour under. As the in-

† Credibility, vol. 1, p. 154.

“terpolations of the larger epistles are plainly
 “the work of some Arian, so even the smaller
 “epistles may have been tampered with by the
 “Arians, or the orthodox, or both, though I do
 “not affirm that there are in them any consider-
 “able corruptions or alterations.”

Salmasius, Blondel, and Daillé, are decided
 that all the epistles are spurious; and Le Sueur,
 after giving an account of the whole matter, says
 that the last of them, viz. Mr. Daillé, has clearly
 proved that the first, or small collection of Ignatius's
 epistles, was forged about the beginning of
 the fourth century, or 200 years after the death
 of Ignatius, and that the second, or larger col-
 lection, was made at the beginning of the sixth
 century*.

Is this then an authority to be quoted so
 decisively against me, as to be preceded by,
 “We will endeavour to *answer* † Dr. Priestley
 “upon grounds less liable to be questioned,”

* Sueur, A. D. 107.

† The reader will easily perceive that these animadver-
 sions on my work are very improperly called a *review*.
 They are a professed *answer*, and yet the writer does not
 so much as mention the arguments on which I lay the great-
 est stress. Can any thing be more evidently calculated to
 injure a work, and to mislead the reader with respect to it?
 It is pluming himself on the victory, before he has even
 ventured to make the attack; having only as it were
 skirmished at a distance, and even that without gaining any
 real advantage.

(meaning

(meaning than that of the hymns used by christians in early times) by "the positive testimony of many of writings which he will hardly assert were penned after Justin Martyr †." I am not ashamed however to assert this after such respectable authorities as I have mentioned above; and I challenge this writer to prove that the passage he has quoted from Ignatius was not penned after the time of Justin Martyr.

If any passage in these epistles be spurious, I should not hesitate to pronounce *this* to be one. Such language as "fleshly and spiritual, made and not made, God incarnate, real life in death, begotten of Mary and of God, in one respect liable to suffering, and in another incapable of it," favours strongly of a much later age than that of Ignatius. It is nothing but controversy that teaches such definite and guarded language as this. It could not, I think precede the Arian controversy; and this agrees very well with the date assigned to those epistles by Mr. Daille, which is after the council of Nice. I should almost as soon think that Ignatius composed the Athanasian creed, as this quaint sentence. They are much in the same style. My critic adds, "there are other passages in the writings of this most ancient father, which are equally expressive of the two natures of Christ, but we think this fully sufficient to confute Dr. Priestley's assertion, without troubling the reader with any more quotations."

† P. 524.

Ignatius not being quoted by Eusebius, or his author, among *antient authorities* for the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, is alone a sufficient proof that no such passage as this was to be found in the epistles of Ignatius in his time. If this writer did not know that the genuineness of these epistles of Ignatius was questioned, he ought not to write on these subjects, and if he did know it, it was disingenuous not to mention it.

As to the passage which my critic quotes from Barnabas, he himself acknowledges (but in an ironical manner, unworthy of the seriousness of the argument) that it may be explained in a sense consistent with the Socinian doctrine, as well as some passages of scripture. I, however, am a Socinian, and I scruple not to say, that, in my opinion, the interpretations of scripture which he ridicules are the only just and natural ones: but this is not a place for that argument.

It is true that I have quoted the epistle of Barnabas without saying any thing about its authenticity. In reality, I do not know what to think of it, and my critic must know that the genuineness of it has been much disputed. The passage, however, which he quotes is from that part of it, of which we have only an old Latin version, and this he has not rightly translated. It is *die ante constitutionem seculi*, which is not properly *before the beginning of the world*, but *on the day*

day before it. Now the notion of the Father speaking to the Son on the very day before the creation favours, I think, of a later age than that of Barnabas. Let any thing like this be produced from the scriptures. If this be a *plain*, it is, I think, a suspicious *declaration of the pre-existence of Christ.*

SECTION VI.

Of the doctrine of the miraculous conception.

IN expressing my opinion concerning the prevalence of the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ, I make a limitation, saying, "This language has all the appearance of an apology for an opinion contrary to the general and prevailing one; as that of the humanity of Christ (at least with the belief of the miraculous conception) probably was in his time." This my criticiser calls "a very great inconsistency," * "the Dr. he says, "has no right to assert his *at least with the belief of a miraculous conception.*" The insertion is intirely arbitrary, and those who know less of the author's character than we do, and may not have the same well grounded assurance of his integrity, may possibly be led to imagine that he intro-

* P. 522.

“duced those words only to give some colourable pretext to his own principles.”

In all that I have read of controversial writing, I hardly recollect any instance of a more groundless and perverse misrepresentation of a writer's obvious meaning than this, on which so loud an exclamation is founded. For what can be more evident than that I do not use these words as those of Justin Martyr, but only as expressive of an opinion of *my own*, formed from all the circumstances put together. And certainly I have a full right to introduce whatever clause I please into any sentence of *my own*, provided that, as in this case, I make myself only answerable for the propriety of it.

The reason why I was inclined to think that the doctrine of the miraculous conception was pretty generally received by the Ebionites in the time of Justin, was, that Irenæus passes no censure on any that believed that doctrine. But it may perhaps, with more probability be inferred, that because neither Justin Martyr nor Irenæus speak of any other Ebionites than those who maintained that Christ was the proper son of Joseph, the doctrine of the miraculous conception had not gained any ground even among them till a later period. I find no mention of *two kinds* of Ebionites before Origen. I repeat it, however, as my real opinion, that the

that the doctrine of the humanity of Christ (at least with the belief of the miraculous conception) was the more general faith of christians in the time of Justin Martyr. Now let the reader judge what occasion there was for the severe strictures on this passage that I have quoted above. In general, I believe it is thought that I express myself so as to be understood; at least I endeavour to do so, but I can never undertake to guard my meaning from such unaccountable constructions as these.

As to the doctrine of the miraculous conception itself, it is not, in fact, of any more consequence to the Socinian, than it is to the Arian or the Athanasian hypothesis; for it is no impediment to the union of the Arian, or the Athanasian Logos, to the human nature of Christ, that his body was derived from Joseph. For any thing that we can judge, a man produced in the natural way was just as proper for the residence of this heavenly inhabitant, as one made on purpose; and if it was fit that Christ should have a human nature at all, it may be supposed to have been equally fit, that he should have a *proper human nature*; differing as little as possible from that of *his brethren*, as we are called. There is, therefore, no more reason why the Arians or Athanasians, should be more attached to the belief of the miraculous conception, than the Socinians.

The

The doctrine itself connects equally well, or equally ill, with any particular hypothesis concerning the nature of Christ.

But it is an objection which affects the Arian hypothesis only, that upon their scheme Christ is properly, and with respect to his person an *Unique* in the creation; there being no *class* or *species* of such beings, at least as far as we are informed of; a being created on purpose to be the maker of all things under God, or the medium of all his communications to mankind. Whereas, upon the Socinian hypothesis, Christ, with respect to his person, is no proper *Unique*, though produced in a super-natural way; because, when produced, he was precisely of the same *class* and *rank* with other men, who, in themselves considered, were fully equal to him in all respects. Was Adam less properly a *man*, and an *Unique*, merely because the *manner of his production* was so? It is therefore a very unfair representation that the Reviewer gives of this business in his note*. He might as well say that Enoch and Elijah were *Uniques*, because there was something peculiar in their manner of going out of the world, as that Christ was so, because there was something peculiar in his manner of coming into it.

Should I have any controversy with a Jew, I should not feel myself at all embarrassed

* P. 523.

with

with this circumstance of the miraculous conception; as I should not hesitate to follow the example of the candid Justin Martyr with respect to it; telling him, that he was at full liberty to think as he should see reason to do on that subject; and that he might be as good a christian as the Ebionites were before him, though he should believe no more of the miraculous conception than they had done.

S E C T I O N VII.

Miscellaneous Articles.

I.

I DO acknowledge that I have inadvertently made Victor the successor of Zephyrinus, but it is certainly of little consequence, and the mistake may be rectified without any injury to my argument. I remember that the passage stood right when it was first printed, but was altered, I cannot recollect how, or why, in the proof sheet. Men of much business, and of a very little candour, will easily excuse a slip of this kind.

II.

I also cannot now account for my saying that Hermas is not quoted by Irenæus, when it was a thing that I could not but have observed, or read of. This, however, is of little moment. And, in fact, the mistake is not so great

great as it seems to be. For Hermas is not quoted by name in Irenæus, and when all the circumstances are considered, I even think it may admit of some doubt whether the short passage that Irenæus does cite was intended by him for a quotation from Hermas. The whole passage is as follows *, “ The scripture therefore well says, In the first place believe that there is one God, who created and established all things, making them out of nothing;” and that passage is found in the pastor of Hermas, || but we have only a Latin translation of Hermas, and therefore cannot be quite sure that the *words* were the very same, and the *sense* of them is certainly found in what is properly called *the scripture*; and I do not know that Irenæus ever quotes any other book by this title except those which we now characterize in that manner. He quotes no other author, I believe, without either his name, or some title, or circumstance, sufficiently descriptive of him. However, I do not insist upon this, and shall correct the passage.

Tertullian says of this work of Hermas § *ab omni concilio Ecclesiarum inter apocrypha et falsa judicatur. It is rejected as spurious by all the councils of the churches.*

III.

With respect to the *Alogi*, the Reviewer says, † “ why should it be doubted that there were

* Lib. 4, cap. 37, p. 330. || Lib. 2, Mand. 1.

§ De Pudicitia cap. 10, p. 563. † P. 521,

“ heretics

“ heretics in the time of Epiphanius who re-
“ jected the gospel of St. John? Were there not
“ heretics in his day, and long before, who re-
“ jected other books of the New Testament?
“ Dr. Priestley’s conjecture will not be easily,
“ admitted. The contrary supposition is na-
“ tural *a priori*, and it has the support of
“ history too.”

I ask, of what history before, and in fact, besides, that of Epiphanius. It is sufficiently evident that there could not have been any who rejected all the writings of John before the time of Eusebius, who considers very particularly the objections that had been made to the genuineness of the other books; and that the same *Alogi* should reject these books after the time of Eusebius, and not before, is highly improbable. Epiphanius himself ascribes this rejection to the *Alogi in general*, and not to those of his time only; and he supposes the heresy of the *Alogi* to have been an old one, of which that of Theodotus was a branch.

As to the testimony of Epiphanius, especially concerning those against whom he writes with so much inveteracy, I own it weighs no more with me than it did with Le Clerc, whose opinion of this writer may be seen in his ecclesiastical

clesiastical history †. He is certainly the least to be depended upon of any of the fathers.

The Reviewer adds, “ was there not a modern disciple of Artemon who rejected, if not the whole of St. John’s gospel, yet the introduction to it? It is but proceeding a step farther to pronounce the whole to be spurious.”

Though a Socinian myself, I do not hold myself obliged to defend what has been advanced by any other Socinian. Like men who think for themselves we differ as much as others who go by the same common name. But certainly this censure is illiberal and unjust. On what grounds, S. Crellius rejected the introduction of St. John, I cannot tell. His grandfather, the famous John Crellius, did not. But it has always been deemed a sufficient objection to the genuineness of any writing, that it contains opinions which, from other evidence, appear not to have been those of the age in which it was supposed to have been written. So far am I from rejecting this introduction, that I think it inexplicable except upon Socinian principles. However, between rejecting this *introduction*, and rejecting the *whole gospel*, there are many more steps, or a much larger step, than my Reviewer seems to imagine. I

† A. D. 103.

hope this writer did not mean to insinuate that Socinians in general make so little account of the gospels, or any part of them, that there is but a small step between them and unbelievers; though by some he may be so understood.

C O N C L U S I O N.

THUS have I presented my readers with a fair and candid state of the charges which have been brought against my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*; and I think I have made it appear, that all the real oversights are of very little consequence, and may be easily rectified without the least injury to my argument in any one place. I therefore leave it with my readers to determine whether there was any just cause for such vehement exclamation as that with which the critic begins his remarks. “When
 “we review the passages we have now transcribed,
 “we are equally grieved and astonished. *Periculosum est in Limine offendere!* We are grieved
 “to see a writer of Dr. Priestley’s eminence,
 “and who hath long stood very high, even in
 “the opinion of his enemies, for integrity of
 “character, laying himself so open to the charge
 “of perversion and mis-representation. We are
 “astonished at his rashness, though we know
 “that great zeal doth not always listen to the
 “more scrupulous dictates of prudence. But
 common

“ common sense should at least teach it to pre-
 “ serve a decent appearance ; and in matters
 “ that fall within the circle of history, and where
 “ invention can have no play, a writer should
 “ be careful not to give his enemies cause for
 “ exultation by positive assertions, which are not
 “ only *without* proof, but in *direct opposition* to
 “ it. We hope that Dr. Priestley will not think
 “ that *we* are become his enemies for speaking
 “ the truth. He is the last person that can with
 “ any grace, complain of a freedom of this sort.
 “ He often invites it with an earnestness which
 “ shews that he is not afraid of it. We rely on
 “ his candour for the freedom we now take with
 “ him ; and if that should prove to be less in
 “ *power* than it is in *form* (which, however we
 “ do not think will be the case) we shall rest
 “ satisfied with the integrity of our own mo-
 “ tives.” Such an attempt to alarm the public,
 and prejudice the minds of their readers against it,
 ought certainly to have had some better foundation.

As to this writer's *integrity*, I do not call it in
 question ; but am very willing to account for
 his mistakes and mis-representations on princi-
 ples similar to those on which, with some de-
 gree of candor, he accounts for what he suppo-
 sed to be mine. Every effect must have an ad-
 equate cause, and I cannot account for this wri-
 ter's very severe and highly unjust treatment of
 my book without supposing that he looked in-
 to it (from what cause I cannot divine) with
 a very

a very eager desire to find fault with it, and to expose it. A good natured critic might have pointed out the same oversights, and have shewn how they might be corrected without any real injury to the work.

It is not easy, in a work of such extent, the materials for which were necessarily collected at different times, to put the whole together (when some of the facts, and the evidence of them must have been in part obliterated from the mind) without making inconsiderable mistakes. No first edition of any large historical work was ever free from them. All these I shall be as solicitous to rectify as any person can be to find them out; and every intimation of this kind I shall willingly receive, whether it comes from a friend or a foe.

I have already drawn out a list of such *Corrections* and *Additions* as I think of any consequence; and if there be another edition of the work, I may perhaps alter the construction of some other passages which readers of the same turn with this Reviewer may misunderstand. But I cannot pretend to write for such readers. It would be giving a great deal of time to very little purpose, and after all might not be effectual; for it is no uncommon thing to labour style into obscurity. I write for the bulk of readers, who have some candour as well as good sense. We do not in this country

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try build our houses so as to have nothing to fear from hurricanes or earthquakes. It is enough to guard them against more common accidents.

This *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* is a work that I have long had in view. I consider it as the most *useful*, and therefore I wish to make it the most *correct* of all my publications. Nothing shall be wanting on my part to make it so, and I hope my enemies will not be wanting on theirs. My object, I trust, is *truth*. I shall pursue it with fairness, and without fear of consequences, and I shall consider every man as acting with me who shall aid me in the pursuit. Opposition is what I always expected, and in reality do not dislike. Indeed no person ought to step into the great amphitheatre of the public, who is not willing to take his chance for all accidents (for treatment fair and unfair) and who is not prepared to meet them. Few persons have been more disciplined in this way than myself, and therefore I must be made of bad materials indeed, if I be not better prepared than most others for all these events. It will be happy if the discipline of this life in general prepare me as well for the exercises of another.

It may amuse some of my readers to be informed that, excepting a copy of verses prefixed ~~to~~ and Peter Annet's short hand, written when I was
a school

a school boy, my first essay for the press was an article in the *Monthly Review*; so that when I was twenty I was placed upon the bench, and now at fifty I stand at the bar, and sometimes perhaps before such judges as I myself then was. From this awful tribunal, though my real merit has been nearly the same, I have sometimes received the most virulent censure, and at others the greatest applause, when I have been conscious to myself that I have not been entitled to either. But undue praise may serve to counterbalance undue censure.

As to my *literary reputation*, I can truly say that, little as it may be, it is quite sufficient to content me, and it ought to be so, for it is something more than I deserve. I can pretend to no such *superior qualifications* as my present critic, whether in earnest or not, has thought proper * to ascribe to me. Success in such pursuits as I have been engaged in, I well know, requires no great extent of mental power, but God has been pleased to give me an active, and I hope an honest mind; and when a man is always busily seeking, with his eyes fairly open, and especially in places where others are afraid to go, he will sometimes find things worth looking for, and that had escaped more timid researchers.

* P. 521.

It has pleased God, in the course of his providence, to open my own eyes, after having been educated in all the gloom and darkness of Calvinism, and I am determined (in conjunction with my philosophical researches) to do all that I can to open the eyes of others. With this object in view, I am ready, with the apostle, to go through *evil report as well as good report*; and whatever of active life may remain to me, I am resolved to make the most of it; there being, as the saying is, *rest enough in the grave*. I have no higher wish with respect to this life, than to live and die in the various pursuits in which I am now engaged; and I hope to rise to a scene of equal activity, and of equally pleasurable and useful pursuits, in a future life.

ERRATUM.

P. 48, l. 20, for *it*, read *the work*.

F I N I S

R E M A R K S
ON THE
MONTHLY REVIEW

OF THE
LETTERS TO DR. HORSLEY;

IN WHICH
THE REV. MR. SAMUEL BADCOCK,

THE
WRITER of that REVIEW, is called upon to defend
what he has advanced in it.

BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L.L.D. F.R.S.

HE THAT WALKETH UPRIGHTLY WALKETH SURELY.
SOLOMON.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

IN answer to some who, I well know, will be ready to blame me for replying to charges proceeding from such gross ignorance, and evident malignity, as those contained in the *Monthly Review*, I would observe, that many persons (as I sincerely rejoice to find) are extremely anxious about the progress of this controversy, relating to the general opinion of the primitive christians, concerning the person of Christ, as, with them, it will be nearly decisive with respect to their believing him to be a man, or something more than a man; and I think I owe them every assistance that I am able to give them.

Many of these persons, not having the proper authorities at hand, have it not in their power to judge between my opponents and me, except by comparing what one writer shall produce in answer to another; and being themselves earnest searchers after truth, and

men of upright minds, they cannot easily bring themselves to suspect any writer of *gross unfairness* till it is distinctly pointed out. They are, therefore, staggered when they hear things so confidently asserted, and so speciously represented, as they are by my present antagonist. Now the small trouble of writing such a pamphlet as this, is a trifle, compared to the satisfaction that I know I shall give to many persons of the description above-mentioned.

Besides, preparatory to the large *Historical View of opinions concerning the person of Christ*, which I propose to write, and for which I am collecting materials, I wish, by every means in my power, to bring every thing of consequence relating to it to a thorough discussion, and to draw out, if possible, every *latent objection*; that I may have the whole subject, with its proper evidence, fairly before me; and controversy, when a person has a proper command of his temper, is an excellent means to that end.

I acknowledge, however, that I should not have noticed any thing that has yet been
2 advanced

advanced by Mr. Badcock on this subject; if it had not been out of regard to the credit which it derives from its publication in the *Monthly Review*, and the advantage of circulation which he has by that means secured. Besides, I am not now answering an *anonymous* antagonist; but a man engaged, by a regard to his reputation, to bring his charges to an issue, by which means some advantage will be gained. Indeed, as an anonymous Reviewer, the following declaration binds him to an explicit answer to what I here alledge in my own just defence, in reply to his virulent accusations.

“ When attacked by so formidable a
 “ disputant as Dr. Priestley, we could not
 “ avoid defending ourselves, as the repu-
 “ tation of our work was at stake. If we
 “ have obtained any advantage over our
 “ learned opponent, we exult not in our
 “ success, but honestly declare, that we
 “ wish not to be again called to battle in
 “ the field of controversy, which generally
 “ produces more briars than laurels. It
 “ behoves us, however, to be always pre-
 A 3 “ pared

“pared to answer every unjust charge, and
“to clear ourselves from every aspersion.”
Monthly Review for October, 1783, p. 360.

That I may not, however, multiply these small publications unnecessarily, and more than the object of them requires, I assure those who have confidence in my integrity (for it can signify nothing to address those who consider me in the light that Mr. Badcock does) that I shall not write in this manner again, unless I receive something from Mr. Badcock more deserving of a reply than any thing that I have yet seen come from him on this subject; though I shall certainly take some early opportunity of acknowledging any mistake, of the least consequence, that I shall be convinced I have fallen into. I shall, at least, do it when I next reply to Dr. Horsley, which I hope will not be at a distant period. In the mean time, I will, in return, have that confidence in my readers, that they will not be much moved by any future representations of Mr. Badcock, unless they be *more specious*, and *more imposing*, than those which I have already shewn to be merely so.

T H E

T H E

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

I Had not intended to have taken any notice of the Monthly Review of my *Letters to Dr. Horsley*, seeing nothing in it that, in the smallest degree, affected my argument, or that was, on any other account, worthy of notice : but finding some persons (though sufficiently sensible of the *malevolence* with which the charges against me are urged) rather staggered with the extreme *boldness* of the assertions, and those more than implying a charge of the grossest *unfairness* and *insincerity* in my conduct, I have, at length, thought proper to make a few observations upon it. In doing this, I think myself authorized by the *nature*, and the almost unexampled *insolence* of the attack, in mentioning (what indeed is no secret) the name of the Reviewer, viz. *Mr. Samuel Badcock*, a dissenting minister at South Molton, in Devonshire ; as (without having directly or indirectly sought for it) I have been informed since the publication of my *Letters to Doctor Horsley*. It was, indeed, mentioned to me before ; but when I considered our former friendship, I did not give any credit to the account. His own

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vanity,

8 I N T R O D U C T I O N.

vanity, I presume, on his imagined victory over me, has led him to betray himself. As a writer, no man, I will venture to say, has been more observant of punctilio than I have been; but when a man's *moral character* is arraigned, as mine very materially is, in this publication, he certainly has a right to the name of his accuser, if he can come at it. Indeed, no man of honour will advance such a charge against another without, at the same time, giving his own name. Also, in referring to my former acquaintance with Mr. Badcock, I reveal no secret, for I believe it is as generally known as Mr. Badcock himself is.

I shall select from this Review the most plausible, and the most confident of all the charges, as a specimen of the rest; and let any impartial person, of competent knowledge of the subject, judge between us.

R E M A R K S

REMARKS

ON THE

MONTHLY REVIEW.

SECTION I.

Of the Omission of the Sentence in Justin Martyr.

I HAD observed that Justin Martyr treats the *unitarians* of his age with great tenderness, at the same time that he treats those whom he calls *heretics*, with much asperity; saying, as the Reviewer quotes from me, p. 61, "There are two passages in this writer, in which he speaks of *heretics* with great indignation; but in both the passages he has evidently a view to the *Gnostics* only. He particularly mentions the *Marcionites*, the *Valentinians*, the *Basilideans*, and the *Saturnianians**. He says, they blasphemed the Maker of the world, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and

* "Καὶ ἄλλοι ἄλλῳ ὀνομασίῃ (— and others under another name" —) follows in the original, though unnoticed in Dr. P.'s translation. At the same time, we must observe, that Dr. P. has misquoted the name of the last mentioned sect, by copy-

“ and Jacob : that they denied the resurrection,
 “ and maintained, that after death the soul went
 “ immediately to Heaven. Had he considered
 “ the Unitarians, with whom he appears to have
 “ been well acquainted, as Heretics, would he not
 “ have mentioned, or *alluded* to their tenets also
 “ in those passages, in which he speaks, and
 “ pretty largely, of the Christian Heretics in
 “ general? It is impossible, I should think,
 “ to read those passages as they stand in the ori-
 “ ginal, introduced as a fulfilment of our Sa-
 “ viour’s prophecy, that there should be false
 “ Christs and false prophets, who should deceive
 “ many: and not be satisfied that, like the apostle
 “ John, Justin Martyr had no idea of there being
 “ *any* Heretics in the Christian church in his
 “ time, besides the Gnostics.”

On this the Reviewer remarks as follows : “ As
 Justin is much connected with our controversy
 with Dr. Priestley, we hope Dr. Horsley will ex-
 cuse us for anticipating a remark which we are
 persuaded he would of necessity make on this
 passage. The remark might be extended much
 farther, with a long retinue of ‘ *exclamations*,’ but
 our limits oblige us to be as brief as possible.—
 In general, then, we make no scruple of assert-

copying from the Latin version, instead of the original Greek,
 where it is Σατυρνιαῖοι, *Saturniliani*.”

This I suppose was meant to insinuate that I do not, perhaps
 that I *cannot*, read Greek. It would, however, have been pe-
 dantry to use the term *Saturnilus*, *Saturninus* being much more
 common both with the ancients and moderns.

ing,

ing, in the most direct and unqualified language (for Dr. Priestley desires us to use no ceremony) that in the above representation of Justin's sentiments, we meet with the most flagrant and unaccountable mutilation of a plain passage, that the disingenuity of a controvertist, who is determined to 'keep it up,' *per fas et nefas*, ever presented us with. We beg the reader to turn back to Dr. Priestley's quotation from Justin, and compare his translation with the original. He (i. e. Justin) says, 'They blaspheme the Maker of the world, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Now, this is so put, as to convey to the English reader, or the unlearned (*for* whom Dr. Priestley appears chiefly to write,—but how came he to forget that he was writing *to* Dr. Horsley?)—the translation is *so managed* as to convey no idea of distinction in Justin's mind, between the *Maker of the world*, and the *God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. For the sake both of the learned and unlearned, we will transcribe the original passage, and annex to it a literal translation. Ἄλλοι γὰρ καὶ ἄλλον τρεῖτον βλασφημεῖν τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν ὧν καὶ τὸν ὑπ' αὐτοῖς ἀρεσβησέμενον ἐλευσεσθαι ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ καὶ τὸν Θεὸν Ἀβρααμ, καὶ Ἰσαακ καὶ Ἰακώβ, διδάσκουσιν. i. e. "Others, upon another plan, teach [*their followers*] to blaspheme the Maker of the universe, AND HIM who was before spoken of as coming from him, *even he who was the CHRIST*, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Now, to prove even beyond the possibility of dispute or evasion, that by the *God of Abraham*, &c. Justin meant Christ (to say nothing of the independent evidence arising from the

the passage) we refer the reader to his celebrated *Apology* to the Emperor Antoninus Pius [Thirlby's edit. pag. 93, 94.] in which this expression is not only applied to Christ allusively, but even vindicated as his own appropriate and distinct character. After quoting the passage, Exod. iii. 2, &c. at full, Justin says, '*These words were uttered purposely with a design to prove, that the Son of God, and his Messenger, is Jesus Christ; who was the pre-existent Logos; and who sometimes appeared in the form of fire, sometimes in the similitude of angels, &c. &c.*' Immediately after he blames, in very severe language, the "*senseless Jews*" (αρονσοι Ιουδαιοι) for *affirming that these Words were spoken by the Maker of the universe*. Would he not have said the same of an Ebionite, who, like these *infatuated Jews*, must, on the principles of his own creed, have denied the application of these words to Christ? (See also the Dial. with Trypho. p. 300. 408. and elsewhere.)"

"Dr. Priestley somewhere speaks of Dr. Horsley's *disingenuity** in concealment; can he point out any thing like this?—He somewhere says, that the

* This is an exaggeration of my language. What I said was "*not perfectly ingenuous*," which, when the passage is consulted, no person can say was harsh or improper. See *Letters*, &c. p. 13. Whereas Dr. Horsley has charged me with several instances of gross disingenuity, and all of them manifestly unjust. Among other things, he charged me with wilfully misquoting the common English translation of the bible. A thing so gross as this, would certainly have been censured in an impartial review—This, however, Mr. Badcock did not censure.

Monthly

Monthly Reviewer *writes in a specious and imposing manner.* We ask, in our turn, *who* translates so? Can *he* cast the stone who hath (to all appearance *purposely*) left out a whole member of a sentence; and that too a most essential one; and by artfully dropping the middle part of it, hath entirely misapplied the conclusion?—We are afraid that his very *Vindicator* cannot excuse him, even on the score of what he calls the Doctor's '*rapid glances.*' But rapid glances, though they suit a *poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling*, do not well agree with the sober and steady observation of an *historian.*"

This is the whole of Mr. Badcock's remarks on the passage; and I think it is hardly possible for the heat of controversy to carry any man farther than this. The whole of it, however, is answered *at once*, by observing, that it is to no sort of purpose who it was that *Justin* meant by the *God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* (which Mr. Badcock may find in my own History, and which no person who knows any thing of Justin can be ignorant of) but who it was that the *heretics* he is speaking of meant by the person so described, and whom they meant to blaspheme; and this certainly was not *Jesus Christ*, but *another being*, the supposed maker of the world, the author of the Jewish dispensation, and the introducer of much evil, which, they said, Christ was sent to rectify. They were, therefore, the *Gnostics only*, and not *unitarian christians* that he was reflecting upon, or alluding to; and this is the only circumstance on which my inference was founded.

The

The omission Mr. Badcock speaks of, was made merely to shorten a long greek quotation, without leaving out any thing that could affect the sense. That by the *αλλοι* Justin could not mean any *other kind of people* besides those he had spoken of before, is evident from his using the particle *γάρ*, *for*. In this connection, I maintain that *αλλοι γαρ καὶ αλλοι τροποι*, &c. can bear no other sense than, *For some of them* (viz. of those mentioned, or alluded to before, and also mentioned by name immediately afterwards) *blaspheme the maker of the world, &c. in one way, and others in another*; and will by no means bear to be translated as Mr. Badcock does, *Others upon another plan*, &c. For this I am willing to appeal to any person who has the least pretensions to a knowledge of the Greek idiom. Had Justin said *αλλοι δὲ*, *but*, instead of *αλλοι γάρ*, *for*, there would have been some slight colour for Mr. Badcock's construction of the passage; but at present there is not a shadow of pretence, either from the *pbraseology*, or the general *sense* of the passage, in his favour.

That Mr. Badcock should not have been able to understand the Greek of Justin is the more extraordinary, as the idiom of the Latin tongue is the very same with that of the Greek in this respect. If he will only look into Ainsworth's Dictionary, he will see *Alius alio modo*. Cicero—rendered *one after one sort, another after another*.

If Mr. Badcock really thinks that these blasphemers of *the maker of the world* were persons who

ho blasphemed *Jesus Christ*, by lowering him to the condition of a man, and not the Gnostics, of whom there were many distinctions, as Justin had first observed (and who therefore blasphemed him, *some in one way, and some in another*) he is as ignorant of Ecclesiastical History, as he appears to be of Greek. I will venture to say, he has not, as he pretends, anticipated Dr. Horsley in *this* criticism, and I am willing to appeal to Dr. Horsley himself for it. If the decision be in my favour (of which there can be no doubt) I shall require of Mr. Badcock an acknowledgment as *public* as his offence, and as *full* as it is *heinous*.

Writing in the circumstances in which I do, and inviting criticism from all quarters, if I had had no principle of *integrity* at all, I certainly should not have concealed any thing that I must have known my adversary could not possibly overlook. The omission, therefore, could not, at most, have been any thing more than either an inadvertence, or have arisen from a misunderstanding of the passage and its importance, which a generous adversary would have treated with tenderness.

To shew more distinctly the nature of this omission, on which Mr. Badcock has declaimed so copiously, I shall translate the whole passage, distinguishing the words omitted; by which it will be seen, that I *could* not mean any thing by the omission, but to save myself the trouble of writing so much Greek. Mr. Badcock has also made several omissions,

sions, I presume, for the same reason, in the extract from my letters, p. 4.

“ There are, and have been, many persons who, pretending to be christians, have taught to say and to do atheistical and blasphemous things, and they are denominated by us from the names of the persons whose doctrines they hold (*for some of them blaspheme the maker of the universe, and him who was by him foretold to come as the Christ, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, in one way, and others in another) with whom we have no communication; knowing them to be atheistical, wicked, and impious persons; who, instead of reverencing Jesus, confess him in name only. They call themselves christians, in the same manner as those among the heathens inscribe the name of God on the works of their own hands, and defile themselves with wicked and atheistical rites. Some of them are called Marcionites, some Valentinians, some Basilideans, some

* It is really something extraordinary, that this opinion of Justin Martyr's, that Christ was the medium of all the divine communications to mankind under the old testament dispensation, should have been so readily received, and have spread so generally as it did, when it not only has no countenance from scripture, but is expressly contradicted by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in Heb. i. 1. *God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his son.* Again, chap. ii. 2, 3. *If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, &c. how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord.* What can be more evident than that the writer of this epistle had no idea of God having spoken to mankind by his son before the time of the gospel. ?

Saturnianians,

turnianians, and others go by other names, each from their peculiar tenets; in the same manner as those who addict themselves to philosophy are denominated from the founders of their respective sects. And, as I have said, Jesus, knowing what would come to pass after his death, foretold that there would be such men among his followers."

A man who can fancy there is a reference to any other persons than the *Gnostics* in this passage, may fancy that he finds the detested *unitarians* in any other page of the same author; or, like Don Quixote, he may take a windmill for a giant. For the difference between the ancient unitarians and the *Gnostics* was as great as this. Their opinions are generally spoken of as two *opposite* heresies.

SECTION II.

Of the Creed of Tertullian.

IT will be no less easy for me to shew the extreme weakness, or unfairness of Mr. Badcock's observations with respect to the *creed*, which he quotes from Tertullian, and which he supposes I *purposely* kept out of sight; saying, p. 60, "Few, " are so very courageous as to put such a weapon " in the hand of an adversary, as threatens to demolish them."

B

Without

Without recurring to this observation on Mr. Badcock himself, I shall observe, that in the tract *De Præscriptione*, &c. from which Mr. Hume quotes the *regula fidei*, Tertullian is evidently giving his own gloss, or interpretation, of the creed, and not the creed itself, as delivered to the Churchmen. In writing this work, his great enemy was the Gnostics, and therefore his gloss is directed altogether against them, and does not respect the Unitarians at all; as, indeed, the very first article (omitted by Mr. Badcock) shows. *Regula fidei—qua creditur unum omnino deum esse, nec esse præter mundi conditorem, qui universa de nibus produxerit, &c. i. e.*—“by which we are taught to believe that there is but one God, and this no other than the maker of the world, who produced every thing out of nothing, by his own word, then first sent down, that that word was called his son, that he appeared variously in the name (i. e. in the character) of God, to the Patriarchs, that he was afterwards conveyed, by the spirit and power of God the Father, into the virgin Mary; that he was made flesh in her womb, and from her (existed perhaps existed) appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, that he thence preached a new law, and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven, &c.”

All this is evidently a gloss, and not a simple creed. Whereas, in the treatise *de Velandis Virginibus*, from which I have quoted the creed, he is not opposing orthodoxy to heterodoxy, but faith to unbelief, and was therefore much more likely to give

ve the simple creed, as it was delivered to the catechumens in his day. Accordingly, it is nearly the same that is now generally received. Let the four ancient copies of the creed, viz. the *Vulgar*, that of *Aquileia*, the *Oriental*, and the *Roman* be compared, as they are done by Dupin (*Eccles. hist.* vol. i. p. 12) and it will be seen that none of them contain any such articles as those in Tertullian's gloss. If those articles ever made a proper part of the creed, how came they to be dropped, and indeed to be found no where else?

That Mr. Badcock has entirely mistaken the object and real meaning of what he has given as the creed in the time of Tertullian, and that it refers to the *Gnostics only*, is evident from every article relating to God and Christ in it. The Gnostics maintained that the Supreme Being himself, the Father of Jesus Christ, did not make the world, but that it was the work of a different being, the same that appeared to the patriarchs and prophets, but entirely different from the Christ. On the contrary, all the articles above recited from Tertullian's gloss upon the creed, are evidently intended to express, that the immediate maker of the world, the *logos*, or *verbum dei*, was the same person that appeared to the patriarchs and prophets, and was also afterwards the Christ.

It appears to me (but I submit the conjecture to the learned) that the Gnostics, who gave so
 B 2 much

much alarm to the primitive Christians, had advanced so many specious arguments, to prove that the Supreme Being himself was not the immediate maker of the world, and the author of the Jewish dispensation, that the orthodox were, in fact, staggered by them; and so far conceded to them, as to content themselves with maintaining that the being who made the world, and who appeared to the patriarchs and prophets, though not the supreme God himself, was the word, or power, of that God personified; so as to become a *second God*, really different from the first; taking advantage of some expressions in the old testament, and also of the language of John in the introduction to his gospel. For of the same *logos*, or *word*, which John personified figuratively (as *wisdom* is personified in the book of Proverbs) they made a *real* and *permanent person*. Gnosticism, therefore, as well as Platonism, was a great means of establishing the doctrine of the *personification of the logos*, which was the first step towards the modern Athanasian doctrine of the trinity. In fact, the orthodox, used many of the same arguments with the Gnostics, to prove that the Supreme God himself was not the person who appeared to the patriarchs, &c.

On the whole, it must, I think, be evident to the impartial reader, that the proper creed in the time of Tertullian was that which I produced from him as such in my *Letters to Dr. Horsley*, p. 28; whereas, that which Mr. Badcock has produced

uced expresses no more than Tertullian's own faith, which is not the question in debate. Indeed, how could Tertullian consider that as the established creed assented to by every catechumen, which, according to his own account, was not believed by those whom he (out of *contempt*, Mr. Badcock will say) represents as the *major part* of christians in his time?

SECTION III.

Miscellaneous Articles.

I Am tempted to give a few other specimens of Mr. Badcock's mode of reviewing, and shall begin with his most extraordinary remarks on the manner in which I have treated an opinion of Eusebius, P. 59.

“ With respect to the suffrage of Eusebius to the
 “ orthodoxy of the primitive church, and particularly
 “ of the bishops of Jerusalem, towards the close of
 “ the apostolic age ; a suffrage so full and explicit,
 “ that it has been deemed a decisive argument
 “ against Dr. Priestley's hypothesis (viz. that *the*
 “ *primitive Jewish church, and its bishops, were pure*
 “ *Ebionites*) with respect to this testimony, we say
 “ the Doctor could only find one way of getting
 “ rid of it.” “ It is not,” says he, “ to be re-
 B 3 “ garded.

“ garded. What a prodigious advantage this short
 “ and compendious method of decision gives a
 “ man over his opponent! It saves all the needless
 “ expence of criticism. It serves instead of a thou-
 “ sand arguments, and it has the singular felicity
 “ of being sheltered from all reply.”

After reading this, any person would naturally imagine, that I had given *no reason at all* why I thought that the assertion of Eusebius was not to be regarded, whereas I immediately subjoin such reasons as I deemed sufficient; observing, that the *facts* which he himself records, are inconsistent with it *. The Reviewer has not even quoted the whole sentence, which ends thus, “ it is not to be regard-
 “ ed, unless they bring some sufficient proof of
 “ their assertion.” I am truly ashamed to point out instances of such gross dissingenuity, even in an adversary, and one who pretends that he has given the very *pith and marrow*, p. 65, of my arguments. After this with what face can Mr. Badcock charge any writer with *concealments*!

Dr. Horsley having charged me with borrowing from D. Zuicker, whose name I had not heard till I saw it in his Charge, Mr. Badcock says, p. 58, “ Dr. Horsley did not happen to hit upon the right
 “ author.” Then let Dr. Horsley and Mr. Badcock guess again. As all my arguments *must* be *stolen* from some person or other, they may happen to be right at last.

* See *Letter to Dr. Horsley*, p. 24.

After

After this, it cannot, surely, be necessary to note any other article in this Review, every one of which discovers nearly equal *ignorance*, or *unfairness*.

Mr. Badcock calls upon me to give a fair and ingenuous answer to his *former animadversions*. I reply that, besides my own fair proposal, by which I still abide, and which will require no more room in the article of *Correspondence*, than is frequently given to others (not to say that their having made my case a *singular one*, gives me a claim to peculiar privileges) I have, directly or indirectly, noticed every thing in it, that I thought worth notice, in my *Letters to Dr. Horsley*. He, as a Reviewer, has an unspeakable advantage with respect to *publication*. My confidence, however, is in the goodness of my *cause*, and in *time*; which, I doubt not, will do me ample justice.

Two articles on which Mr. Badcock himself laid the most stress at first, I particularly noticed in the *Postscript* of my *Letters to Dr. Horsley*. One of them related to a strong insinuation against my *integrity*, in consequence of his own misconstruction of a plain sentence of mine. He had defended his misconstruction after its being particularly pointed out to him; but being called to look at it *a third time*, he has, at length, given it up, and asked my pardon; so that my integrity has had an escape for this time. This, it is to be observed, relates to the *greatest objection* he had against my History. He pleads in his excuse, that my expression was *equivocal*.

cally worded; whereas it is not possible to put any other construction upon it, and I am not capable of expressing myself with greater clearness.

If Mr. Badcock fails so much with respect to *plain English*, it is no wonder that (through his extreme precipitancy, I suppose) he should make mistakes in *Latin* and *Greek*. I have sufficiently considered what he first called a *strong reason* for a material difference between the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, what he afterwards called a *conjecture*, and now calls a *demonstration*; but I do not think it worth my while to shew the extreme *futility* of it. To such demonstrations as these, I shall content myself with saying, *Valeant quantum valere possunt*. If Dr. Horsley chuses this ground, I shall meet him upon it, and speak fully to it.

THE CONCLUSION.

I Cannot say that I can intirely satisfy myself with respect to the cause (and every *effect* must have a *cause*) of the extreme virulence with which Mr. Badcock began, and now continues, to urge this attack upon me, so totally unprepared as he evidently is to discuss topics of this nature.

I own I sometimes read his former letters to me with peculiar emotion, and am ready to think this
 2 whole

whole business a dream ; so unwilling am I to believe that any person who once professed himself so much attached to me, can be so much at enmity with me, as he now appears to be. Far am I from wishing that *truth* should ever be sacrificed to *friendship*, or any other consideration. I have shewn an example of the contrary myself, in my controversy with Dr. Price, but Mr. Badcock's situation with respect to me should have led him to adopt a more decent mode of opposition.

Time was, when, if it had been foretold to Mr. Badcock, that he would ever do what he now has done, he would, I am confident, have replied as Hazael did to the prophet, "*What, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?*" But as Hazael did not then know that he would become king of *Affyria*, so neither did Mr. Badcock foresee that he would ever be a *Monthly Reviewer*.

The editor of the *Monthly Review* should be cautious how he suffers his writers to sport with men's characters ; for himself, as *publisher*, is answerable for it. He may not be a judge in *matters of literature*, and therefore he may be deceived by recommendations, and by persons who give themselves airs, as men of *deep learning* ; but every man may see what kind of reflections affect *moral character*, and all know that this is a sacred thing. Mr. Griffiths may not have much knowledge of *Greek*, and therefore would never suspect, that he who, with so much insolence, treated my *Vindicator* with the appellation of *ISTE GRÆCULUS*,
should,

should, make the mistake that he has done with respect to Greek ; but having some knowledge of *me*, he should not have inserted such reflections as the present Review contains, at least without consulting other persons besides a professed opponent. He will hardly be able to justify himself to the public, not for employing a man so unqualified as Mr. Badcock is (I mean with respect to the subject of the present controversy, in which I do not find that his reading has extended much farther than Bishop Bull) but for suffering such *gross abuse* of a person that he must know *could* not deserve it.

As to what he promises with respect to my *future publications*, I presume that no person, about whose good opinion I can ever be solicitous, will take a character of any performance of *mine*, or of any thing that *relates to me*, from a *professed adversary*. Dr. Horsley's charge, a work full of the highest orthodoxy (such as certainly would not have passed without censure in this Review some years ago) has been recommended with unqualified applause, and a careful selection has been made from it of almost every thing in it that is either specious in itself, or contemptuous with respect to me. For this, I am pretty confident, Dr. Horsley will not now thank them; as by this time, I doubt not, he is himself ashamed of the passages they have quoted. My friend, Mr. Lindsey, has, in several publications, largely insisted upon *the unitarianism of the primitive christian church* (the very same thing that has roused all the rage of the present Reviewer) without
the

the least note of disapprobation from his predecessors.

I am now expecting Dr. Horsley's reply, and I shall be much disappointed if it be not more guarded and temperate than his last work; so that I hope we shall proceed in a calm discussion of the serious question that is before the public. I also earnestly wish to engage some *learned Arrian* in this discussion, as I am desirous to write with the fullest information, and with the greatest impartiality on the subject.

At present I am well aware that a great majority of learned men are against me; but I already perceive that the minority is increasing, and in time I doubt not the majority will be with me. Not that I can ever promise myself to satisfy every body. Many persons, much superior to myself, will remain unconvinced; as indeed many yet do with respect to *transubstantiation*. But the time will certainly come, when all *prejudice* will give way to the evidence of *truth*.

I have much *new evidence* to produce, as well as many confirmations of that which I have already laid before the public, and I wish to have every part of it thoroughly and publicly discussed. Mr. Badcock calls me *a disappointed and mortified author*. How a man really *feels*, is best perceived by the *temper* with which he writes, and not by his own *declarations*, or those of others for him; and it is much too soon to use any language of this kind.

The

The controversy is but just opened, and will probably continue a long time; and we may then see who are the mortified and disappointed writers.

When I read the various modes of self-complacent exultation, in which Mr. Badcock, and Dr. Horsley also, insult over me, as over a man whom they have completely confuted and silenced, I fancy myself to be in the case of the Irishman who talked of hearing his own funeral sermon. But I would advise these two antagonists of mine to take a lesson from Æsop, and not to sell the skin of the bear, till they have dispatched him, and indeed not till they have the evidence of other eyes than their own that he is actually dead. I am not, like Partridge, so unreasonable as to expect to be an evidence for my own existence; but let it be decided by a fair jury, whether I be alive, or dead.

For my part, I shall steadily pursue my purpose, and I have experience enough in these matters to be able to confide in my own temper, so as to avail myself of all the new light that shall be thrown upon the subject, and to correct my own observations, as far as I shall see reason so to do. I may be deceived myself; but I believe that even my adversaries (except Mr. Badcock) will not think I shall knowingly contribute to deceive others.

There are not many persons, I hope, who will think of me as Mr. Badcock does, page 63, "Though it may be possible for any man to make a mistake (especially when he *rapidly glances* over a passage) yet to persevere in it
" after

after it has been pointed out, seems reserved to be the distinguishing characteristic of Dr. Priestley." He should not, however, have said this in the same publication in which he acknowledges that he himself had done the same thing, and that he did not see his mistake till it had been pointed out to him *a third time*.

Mr. Badcock might have animadverted upon my mistakes, real or supposed, with as much severity as he had pleased, I should not have been much affected by his censures, perhaps, should not have taken any farther notice of them; certainly should not have called upon him *by name*, as I now do, if he had not represented me as *a dishonest man*, wilfully perverting the meaning of the authors I quote, and determined to keep up this controversy, as he says, *per fas et nefas*. I do not, however, think so ill of him as not to hope, that, upon cooler reflection, he will be ashamed of accusations so violent, and so ill-founded. Be this as it will, I trust that in this controversy, and in all my writings, as well as in my whole conduct, I have respect to a higher tribunal than either that of the Monthly Review, or that of the Public.

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